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NASSER'S POLITICAL AND SECURITY DILEMMA:

AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS DURING THE YEMENI CIVIL WAR, 1962-1967

By

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To Diana, Adam, Dannah, Aisha, and Metha

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1
Research Questions and Major Argument 3
Historical Problem 3
The Scholarly Literature 6
Organization of the Study 9
Research Methods and Procedures 10
CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORICAL LEGACY 12
The Pre-Nasser Era, 1945-1952 15
The Nasser Era before Suez, 1952-1956 19
First Contact 22
The British Presence 26
Western Influence 27
The Israeli Factor 28
The Post-Suez Era, 1956-1963 34
Kennedy's "Cool but Correct Policy" 39
Conclusion 43
CHAPTER THREE: NASSER'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PREDICAMENTS 44
Nasser's Dilemma 45
The UAR: Spirit of *al-Ummah al-Arabiah* (the Arab Nation) 48
Abdul Kareem Kassem's Iraq 53
The End of "the Nasser Experiment" 56
Kennedy's Response to the Breakup 62
Nasser's Political Dilemma 64
The Economic System Under Nasser 66
Nasser's House Divided 69
Conclusion 72
CHAPTER FOUR: THE SYRIAN DILEMMA & NASSER'S YEMENI LABYRINTH, 1962-1963 73
Choosing between Yemen and Algeria 75
American-Egyptian Relations on the Eve of the Yemeni Civil War 79

The Yemeni Crisis 80
Sadat's War: The Road to Intervention 82
Komer's War....87
Nasser, Kennedy, and Aramco....91
Israel, Nasser, and Yemen 94
Kennedy's Peace Efforts....96
Conclusion 98
CHAPTER FIVE: PHANTOM GOVERNMENTS AND THE PORTENTS OF WAR 100
The Nasserist-Ba'athist Rivalry....102
Operation Hard Surface and Anglo-Egyptian Relations in Southwest Arabia 104
"Congressional Zionist" and Nasser 109
Out of the Void: Lyndon Johnson Encounters the Middle East 113
The Maghreb Test and Egyptian-American Relations....115
LBJ and Yemen....118
Johnson, Nasser, and the Spinelli UNYOM Mission 123
Conclusion 129
CHAPTER SIX: PALESTINE, HYDROPOLITICS, AND AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS 131
Reinventing Palestine....134
Ahmed Shuqayri Enters the Palestinian Fray 138
Palestine, Yemen, Hydropolitics Politics and American-Egyptian Relations 139
The Cairo Summit....151
The Creation of the PLO....154
Conclusion 155
CHAPTER SEVEN: BRITAIN'S COLD WAR WITH NASSER EAST OF SUEZ 157
Nasser's Security Dilemma confronts Britain's Security Dilemma 159
Home's Offensive and Nasser's Response 162
Lyndon Johnson's Approach to Yemen....166
The Saudi and British Political Dilemmas in Southwestern Arabia 172
Nasser's Political and Security Dilemma 174
The Fall of the Home Government and Nasser's Security Dilemma 177
Al-Jayfi and the Ba'athists' Conspiracy in Yemen....183
Lyndon Johnson and the Spirit of the Jidda Agreement....185

Conclusion 190
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION 192
REFERENCES 198
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 212

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines American-Egyptian relations from 1962 to 1967 during the Yemeni civil war. The central question that is raised here is: how did Nasser's security and political dilemma cause a breakdown in American-Egyptian relations and contribute to the outbreak of the Six Day War in June 1967? Based on archival research in Israel, the West Bank in Palestine, the United States, and Great Britain, I argue that Gamal Abdul Nasser did not pursue a strategy of confrontation with the United States in the 1960s, but was in fact responding to a security and a political threat or dilemma he faced in the Middle East and in Egypt. As he confronted this security dilemma, Nasser's solutions ran counter to America's strategic goals for the region. My research found that the collapse in relations took place at a crucial moment for Nasser. While he was dealing with the break in American-Egyptian relations, Nasser was also confronting his political enemies in Egypt. At the same time, he was challenged for the leadership of Arab nationalism by conservative Arab regimes (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Libya) and by the Ba'athists. The implications for Egypt and the United States were disastrous for it led to a break in relations between them and eventually resulted in the May Crisis in 1967 that preceded the Six Day War.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On September 26, 1962, Colonel Abdullah Sallal, a Nasserist,[1] overthrew Muhammad al-Badr (Imam Badr) and declared the Yemeni Arab Republic (YAR). Immediately after the revolution, Egypt's leader, Gamal Abdul Nasser, began to pour troops and equipment into the YAR to aid Sallal's revolution. Nasser's intervention in Yemen led Egypt into a five-year commitment that saw Egyptian troops fighting a guerrilla war in the mountains of Yemen. From Cairo's viewpoint, its actions were aimed solely at aiding a close ally and was of no concern to anyone else.

Nasser's decision to intervene in the revolution would, however, cast a long shadow that would eventually reach Riyadh, London, and Washington, DC. Indeed, after sending aid to the YAR Nasser found that he had led his country to the brink of war with Britain and Saudi Arabia. But even more importantly, Nasser would find himself at odds with President Lyndon B. Johnson. By intervening in Yemen, Nasser had upset America's postwar plans for the Middle East, a region that Washington deemed of great national importance because its oil resources were vital to the well-being of Western Europe's economy.[2] In short, the ripple effects of Egypt's intervention in Yemen traveled far and wide.

[1] I use the term "Nasserist" to refer to Arab nationalist who followed Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser's example. They believed in pan-Arabism, Arab socialism, and Sunni Islam as a guide to lead the Arab world to modernization. See Elie Podeh and Onn Winckler eds., *Rethinking Nasserism: Revolution and Historical Memory in Modern Egypt* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004).

[2] See chapter 1 for an explanation of the postwar petroleum order developed by Washington policymakers after the Second World War.

Lyndon Johnson, like his processors, believed that the pivot of global stability resided not in Southeast Asia or Europe, but in the Middle East. [3] The region's abundant oil resources and its strategic location made it, in Johnson's estimation, crucial to the continued health of the West's economies.[4] Regional stability, therefore, became a general policy objective for the White House. The Yemeni civil war and the subsequent conflict between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, however, threatened Washington's objective. Between 1964 and 1967, the Johnson administration sought to continue Kennedy's "Egypt-first" policy, which identified Egypt as key to defeating the spread of Communism in North Africa and the Middle East,[5] and the "ice box" strategy, which entailed setting aside difference over the Arab-Israeli dispute and concentrating on Cairo's and Washington's mutual interests in the region. [6] Reaching these goals would thus lay the foundation for larger American objectives.

Yet Johnson found it difficult to deal with Nasser precisely because of America's security interests in the region and its strategy of containment towards the Soviet Union. Washington's entanglement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in intra-Arab politics confounded the situation. Moreover, domestic forces, such as the U.S. Congress and the Israel lobby, challenged the White House's "Egypt-first" strategy. Sensing the decline of Nasser's pan-Arab movement, the Johnson White House jumped at the chance to abandon Nasser and enlist the conservative regimes (i.e., Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Libya) to contain the Soviet Union.

Johnson made other moves as well. For one, he increased U.S. arms shipments to Israel—first indirectly through West Germany and then later directly—thereby further straining U.S.-

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[3] Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969*, 1st ed. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 288. See also National Security Files [hereafter NSF], Files of Robert Komer, Box 51, Memorandum for the President, January 22, 1965, Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library.
[4] Ibid.
[5] See chapter 1 for the reasons Egypt was key to this task.
[6] Memorandum of Conversation, February 8, 1961, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1962* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office [hereafter GPO], 1994-1996), 17:18.

Egyptian relations. This move, in turn, caused Nasser to abandon the "ice box" strategy, which prompting Johnson in 1966 to abandon the Egypt-first strategy. Relations between the two sides grew so strained that by the time that the May-June crisis of 1967 occurred, Washington had lost all influence with Nasser, thereby laying the groundwork for the war.

Research Questions and Major Argument

This dissertation asks two main questions. First, how did the postwar petroleum order and U.S. containment and alliance politics contribute to Egypt's security dilemma? Second, how did this dilemma contribute to the outbreak of the May-June crisis in 1967? I argue that the origins of the May-June 1967 crisis that led to the Six Day War were rooted in the postwar petroleum order, which was developed by the United States to maintain the free-flow of oil to Europe. This order relied on a combination of elements to maintain it, including Anglo-American cooperation, containment, and private diplomacy.[7] Taken together, these elements created a security dilemma for Nasser and his brand of pan-Arab nationalism, thereby causing him to abandon the postwar petroleum order.[8]

Historical Problem

While there is a burgeoning literature about Johnson's policies toward Southeast Asia in general and the Vietnam War in particular, these works overshadow his diplomatic relations elsewhere. Accordingly, some historians dismiss his Middle East approach as an "absence of

[7] As opposed to public diplomacy, private diplomacy that is unofficial and done in private away from the limelight. For instance, when Nasser agreed to keep the Arab-Israeli conflict in the "ice box" this was through private diplomacy in order to keep the agreement from public view.

[8] The postwar petroleum order was a strategy developed by the United States that called for the free-flow oil to the Europe to sustain the European economy in the postwar era. This order involved a combination of arrangements such as cooperation between oil-producing and oil-transit states, Anglo-American cooperation, containment of Communism and private and public diplomacy. See Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 409-430.

constraints," or emphasize his close ties to Israel, or the period of the Six Day War.[9] Other historians have concentrated on his confrontation with Nasser.[10] There are also a number of historians who dismiss Johnson's approach to the Middle East as a "low priority matter," unlike his predecessors and successors, who are seen as having had a more proactive approach to the region.[11] In addition, historians who focus on the Six Day War examine the war and its aftermath, but ignore the years that preceded the conflict. Through the use of archival records, I demonstrate that Johnson's desire to block the spread of Soviet power and influence to the Middle East was a fundamental part of his national security strategy, not an afterthought.[12]

Despite Johnson's preoccupation with the Vietnam War and his desire to avoid becoming entangled in inter-Arab politics or the Arab-Israeli conflict, he nonetheless found his administration drawn into the region because of its strategic importance to American Cold War goals. In order to bar Soviet influence in the Middle East, the Johnson administration formulated a Middle East strategy that attempted to stabilize the region and keep communism from spreading there. Additionally, the White House developed a distinctive "Johnsonian" method that contributed to the strategies of his successors.[13] Richard Nixon, for instance, used Johnson's "twin pillar" plan to develop his own set of strategies, which encouraged proxy states to take

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[9] Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy from Truman to Reagan*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 119. For a discussion about the Israeli lobby, see "The United States and the 1967 War," in Wm. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim eds. *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 165-192.
[10] The two arguments are made by Douglas Little, "Nasser Delenda Est: Lyndon Johnson, the Arabs, and the 1967 Six-Day War," in H.W. Brands, ed., *The Foreign Policies of Lyndon Johnson: Beyond Vietnam* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 1999), 145-167; and Warren I. Cohen, "Balancing American Interest in the Middle East: Lyndon Baines Johnson vs. Gamal Abdul Nasser," in Warren I. Cohen and Nancy B. Tucker, eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 279-310.
[11] Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 127.
[12] Thomas Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe: in the Shadow of Vietnam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 4.
[13] Ibid., 4-5.

responsibility for their regional security against communism and later called the Nixon Doctrine.[14] Analyzing the Johnson administration's strategy and policy toward intra-Arab politics during the Yemeni conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict provides a valuable window on the evolution of his containment strategy from 1964 to 1967.

Many factors affected Johnson's diplomacy towards the Middle East: the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Yemeni civil war, his affinity for U.S. domestic politics, his long years in the Senate, the Israeli lobby, Congress, and the Washington bureaucracy, especially the State Department. All these factors influenced his policy and strategy toward the region.[15] As is well known, Johnson had a distinctive management style, preferring to solicit advice from as many "trusted associates" as he could gather in the White House or get on the telephone.[16] Taking this approach to the Middle East intertwined his domestic and foreign policies and strategies. This project takes into account these influences on Johnson's policy and strategy toward the region and his adeptness in dealing with them in relation to containment. For instance, when the Israel lobby pressured him to sell arms only to Israel and not Jordan, Johnson skillfully linked arms sales to Jordan with Israel's security, arguing that if the United States failed to give the Jordanians weapons, then the Soviets would fill the void and place Israel in a more dangerous situation.[17]

A close examination of Johnson's approach to the Middle East reveals a more complex picture than previously thought, with three overriding issues demanding his attention: intra-Arab politics, Soviet containment, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Notwithstanding the heated rhetoric,

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[14] Little, "Nasser Delenda Est: Lyndon Johnson, the Arabs, and the 1967 Six-Day War," 154.
[15] Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 125.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Memoranda from Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff, Washington, February 10, 1965, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Vol. 18, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1964-1967* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 2003), 323-324.

Johnson's policy and strategy were not driven by a personal vendetta against Nasser or Nasser's duplicity in Middle Eastern politics.[18] Primary sources show that Johnson weighed every decision carefully and solicited as much advice from experts before making a decision. His decisions toward the Middle East resulted in a strategy not meant to favor one state over another, yet it ended up alienating Egypt anyway.

The Scholarly Literature

The study of American-Egyptian relations before the Six Day War is dominated by works that cover American diplomatic relations with Egypt during the Eisenhower years or on the confrontation between Nasser and Johnson. But there are no scholarly studies that either emphasize the breakdown in American-Egyptian relations before the Six Day War or explain why the breakdown occurred in the first place. Stephen Walt in *The Origins of Alliances* (1987) analyzes the causes of alliance politics in the Middle East but his book is a political science study and not a historical one of Middle East politics. In addition, Walt focuses on the rivalry among the Arab states, not on American-Egyptian relations in the 1960s.[19]

Several studies give a good overview of American-Middle East relations. Seth P. Tillman's *The United States in the Middle East* draws attention to Johnson's Middle East policy, but the work covers an extended period in American history and does not concentrate on American-Egyptian relations from 1962 to 1967.[20] Steven L. Spiegel's The *Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (1986) is a rich source on American foreign policy toward the region from Harry S. Truman to Ronald Reagan. It

[18] The two arguments are made by Little, "Nasser Delenda Est," Brands, ed., *The Foreign Policies of Lyndon Johnson*, 145-167; and Warren I. Cohen, "Balancing American Interest in the Middle East: Lyndon Baines Johnson vs. Gamal Abdul Nasser," in Cohen and Tucker, eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World*, 279-310.
[19] Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987),
[20] Seth P. Tillman, *The United States in the Middle East* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982), 73.

nonetheless ignores the importance of Johnson's contribution to American Middle East policy and does not exclusively emphasize American-Egyptian relations during the Johnson years. Yazīd Sāyigh and Avi Shlaim's edited volume[21] mentions the Johnson administration, but like Spiegel's *Other Arab-Israeli Conflict,* it covers U.S. policy and strategy towards the region during LBJ's administration in a general way. Finally, Peter Hahn's *United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956* (2004) explains Anglo-American relations and Washington and London's rivalry towards Egypt and how this led to the Suez Crisis. In *Caught in the Middle East* (2006), Hahn surveys U.S. foreign policy in the region since 1945 to explain that in order to contain Communism from spreading in the region, the United States became caught in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

William Stivers constructs a specific interpretive framework of American policy toward the Middle East in *America's Confrontation with revolutionary Change in the Middle East* (1986). Although Stivers critically analyzes American policy from 1948 to 1983, he links Johnson's regional security goals with the conservative regimes against the radical ones. Gabriel Kolko's *Confronting the Third World* (1988), while not a study that covers the Middle East specifically, examines U.S. economic policy toward Latin American and the Middle East to demonstrate the economic aspect of U.S. foreign policy. Alan R. Taylor evaluates the United States and the Soviet Union in the region in *The Superpowers and the Middle East* (1991). Taylor argues that between 1955 and 1967, the two superpowers aggravated the Arab-Israeli conflict for their own selfish aims.

Several works cover U.S. relations with the Middle Eastern states during the Johnson administration. One of the first books to examine American relations with the Arab world is U.S.

[21] Yazīd Sāyigh and Avi Shlaim, *The Cold War and the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Ambassador to Egypt John S. Badeau's *The American Approach to the Arab World* (1968), which is a critique of Johnson's approach towards Israel. Badeau also blames Johnson for the deterioration of relations with Egypt. Badeau's analysis is, however, outdated and limited to U.S. relations with Israel and Egypt. Former American diplomat Williams J. Burns examines U.S. economic aid to Egypt and concludes that the strategy was flawed because it attempted to juxtapose economic aid with political manipulation of Egyptian politics.[22] David Schoenbaum's *The United States and Israel* (1993) demonstrates how the tail or periphery (Israel) wagged the dog (United States), the center, and covers all the administrations between Harry Truman to George H.W. Bush. Fawaz A. Gerges's *The Superpowers and the Middle East* (1994) covers the American-Egyptian relations during the Cold War, but does not go into detail on the Johnson years. Warren Cohen surveys the rivalry between Johnson and Nasser and explores the ways Johnson confronted Nasser's growing influence in the Middle East.[23] Burton I. Kaufman in *The Arab Middle East and the United States* (1996) examines the United States and intra-Arab politics since 1945. Kaufman concludes that American diplomatic entanglement in intra-Arab politics led to tensions between the United States and the radical Arab states.

More recent scholarly studies, such as Michael Oren's *Six Days of War* (2002), discuss Johnson's policy during the weeks leading up to the war, but they provide no details on the years before the war. Nigel John Ashton's edited work, *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers, 1967-73* (2007), examines the period of the Six Day War and after. Douglas Little's updated edition, *American Orientalism: the United States and the Middle*

[22] Williams J. Burns, *Economic Aid and American Policy toward Egypt, 1955-1981* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1984), xi.
[23] Warren I. Cohen, "Balancing American Interest in the Middle East: Lyndon Baines Johnson vs. Gamal Abdul Nasser," in Cohen and Tucker eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World*, 279.

East Since 1945 (2008), introduces the role that orientalism plays in American Middle East policy from Truman to George W. Bush. Finally, Wm. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim's recent edited study, *The 1967 Arab-Israili War: Origins and Consequences* (2012), cover Johnson's administration and the influence of the Israel lobby plays in American politics.

Despite their strengths, none of these works examine American-Egyptian relations in the 1960s before the Six Day War nor explain the real reasons—the Yemeni civil war, Nasser's rivalry with the conservatives, and his fight for hegemony of Arab nationalism with the Ba'athists— why the relationship deteriorated. By concentrating on Nasser's security dilemma and Yemen, this study fills the gap in the literature by explaining that Yemen produced a security dilemma for Nasser that led to the break in American-Egyptian relations in 1965.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the foundations of American-Egyptian relations and the role the United States expected Egypt to play in the Middle East after the Second World War. In addition, chapter 1 also presents America's postwar petroleum order and Washington's strategy in choosing Egypt to play a leading role in that order. Moreover, chapter 1 examines the reasons behind Nasser's rejection of the White House's strategy.

In chapter 2, I introduce the beginning of Nasser's political-security dilemma. Chapter 3 examines Nasser's intervention in Yemen after the breakup of the UAR. Chapter 4 stresses the beginning of the break in American-Egyptian relations. I argue that the combination of the Yemeni civil war and the cross border attacks into Saudi Arabia and Aden forced Nasser to confront a new American administration that he perceived as hostile to his security concerns. Further inflaming the situation, the Johnson administration began to sell arms to Israel, which triggered an arms race between Egypt and Israel. When Johnson approached Nasser to discuss

Yemen, Nasser and the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) attributed the White House's stance to the "Invisible Government" theory.[24]

Chapter 5 stresses the use of the Palestinian issue and examines the confrontation between the Arab states and Israel. It also looks at the competition among the Arab states to champion the Palestinian cause. Chapter 6's main emphasis is the confrontation between Britain and Egypt in Southwestern Arabia. It also examines Israeli and Saudi involvement in the guerrilla campaign against Nasser in Yemen.

Chapter 7 concludes the study by reflecting on Nasser's security dilemma and the arms race between Egypt and Israel. It also explains how the Yemeni civil war directly contributed to outbreak of the Six Day War.

Research Methods and Procedures

This study is primarily a diplomatic history of American-Egyptian relations in the period preceding the Six Day War. The intellectual merit of this research resides in its transnational approach to exploring Johnson's policy and strategy toward Egypt within the larger framework of America's containment strategy in the Middle East. It also employs international relations (IR) theory in order to better explain the reasons behind the May 1967 crisis that led to the June 1967 War. It remains, though, firmly on the historical side of the disciplinary dividing line, employing the concepts of the security dilemma and political dilemma solely to explain the reasoning behind Nasser's decision making. I therefore employ the security and political dilemma

[24] James H. Critchfield used this term to describe Egyptian belief in a government behind the American government. Egyptians used this theory to describe the capriciousness in America's foreign policy, especially on issues concerning the Middle East. See Chapter 4. James H. Critchfield to Robert Komer, September 10, 1965, Robert Komer NSF, Box 51, Lyndon B. Johnson Library.

somewhat loosely and not exactly how IR theorists might use them. Despite this caveat, I am confident that readers will see merit in this approach.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL LEGACY

As I understand them, the central objectives of the United States in the Near East are (a) to contain and roll back the influence of the Soviet Bloc; (b) to enjoy continued access to the transportation facilities of the area; (c) to insure the accessibility of Near Eastern oil to the free world; (d) to promote tranquility and progress in the area as an inhabitation both to Soviet influence and intra-area disputes which might invite external interference or threaten direct United States interests.[25]
-John Badeau to Lyndon Johnson

The Vietnam conflict was containable, recalled President Lyndon B. Johnson, but "conflict in the Middle East was something else."[26] Although the war in Indochina has overshadowed Johnson's presidency, his administration spent considerable time and effort trying to keep the Mideast[27] stable in order to maintain the free flow of oil to Europe. This effort was part of an American strategy developed after the Second World War. Referred to by Daniel Yergin as "the postwar petroleum order," or "the Middle East oil complex" by British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd, this economic and political strategy sought to integrate Middle East oil with the European and American economies.[28] This new petroleum order would be safeguarded by an integrated system of defense and political alliances. Any challenges to this order, such as

[25] Badeau to Johnson, "Analysis of U.S. Policy Towards the UAR," January 3, 1964, National Security Files [hereafter NSF], Country Files, Box 158, Lyndon B. Johnson Library [hereafter LBJL].
[26] Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston), 287.
[27] The Truman administration and its successors employed Near East, Middle East and Mideast interchangeably and define this area as encompassing Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine (later Israel), Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, the Persian Gulf area, the Eastern Mediterranean Islands, and Afghanistan. For the purpose of this study, I use the American government's definition. See Memorandum, "The present situation in the Near East—a Danger to World Peace," undated, *Foreign Relation of the United States* [hereafter *FRUS*] *1946*, Vol. 7:1-6.
[28] Daniel Yergin coined the phrase and refers to this as an American arrangement to use Middle Eastern oil to rebuild and sustain the economies of Europe. See Yergin, *The Prize*, 392. See also Nathan J. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ūd, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Yergin, *The Prize,* 482.

those posed by Arab nationalism and Communism, would be seen in Washington as a direct affront to American national security.[29]

However, the region's unstable politics, compounded by the Arab-Israeli conflict, complicated the United States' efforts to sustain the postwar petroleum order. Consequently, the system was maintained by American, European, and Middle Eastern public and private diplomacy. Between November 1963, when he entered the Oval Office, and June 5, 1967, when the Six Day War broke out between Israel and its Arab neighbors, Johnson attempted to preserve the postwar petroleum order in the Mideast by assuaging Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser, who himself faced a political and defense dilemma in the Middle East brought on by the Yemeni civil war, in order to channel the political and social movement known as "Nasserism" to America's advantage.[30] Through Nasser, Johnson, like his predecessors, thought he could use the Nasserists in the region to reinforce America's postwar order.

However, Nasser's Arab nationalism was premised on nonalignment in the Cold War. Nasser and his adherents viewed the Soviet Union and Communism more instrumentally than did American officials. For Nasser, Mideast Communism was entirely different from international Communism. Like Western Imperialism, Mideast Communism presented a direct threat the Nasserist Mideast agenda with its pan-Arab vision. Unlike Western imperialism, Western capitalism, or local Communist international Communism was not an immediate threat to Nasser. These views stood in diametric opposition to America's postwar petroleum order,

[29] Under the Bretton Woods systems the United States tried to maintain free-trade in Europe and open door trade globally. The Middle Eastern oil was vital to this global network.

[30] Gamal Abdul Nasser's brand of Arab nationalism, which among other things sought a pan-Arab state from Morocco to the Persian Gulf, has been referred to by scholars as Nasserism or Nasserist. See Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History: Nation and State in the Arab World* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000).

which saw all forms of Communism—regional and international—as a monolithic force controlled from Moscow.

In addition to Western imperialism, Western capitalism, and Mideast Communism, Nasserism rejected Zionism and its physical representative, Israel. On this issue, Nasser and Johnson attempted to reach some sort of understanding. President John F. Kennedy had previously reached an informal agreement with Nasser known as the "ice box" strategy, which stressed keeping the Palestinian issue out of the limelight and containing the Arab-Israeli conflict in exchange for American economic aid. The Johnson administration simply continued this strategy and Nasser, as long as American economic aid was forthcoming, willingly accepted.

Throughout the 1960s, strains in American-Egyptian relations developed over the maintenance of the postwar petroleum order. Congress, American political groups, American capitalists, conservative Arab regimes, and Israeli and oil lobbyists all attempted to convince Johnson that his approach to Nasser endangered the Middle East oil complex and pressured him to sever relations with Cairo. Therefore, from November 1963 to June 1967, the eve of the Six Day War, Johnson attempted to simultaneously mollify conservative Arab governments, American lobbyists, and Congress. In his attempts to placate them, he took actions that seemed threatening to Nasser and his Arab nationalist agenda. Hence, American and Middle Eastern interest groups undermined the postwar petroleum order by creating a "security dilemma" and a political dilemma for Nasser. This, in turn, culminated in the May Crisis of 1967, which led to the Six Day War of June 5-10.[31]

[31] A security dilemma is when one state (state A) attempts to increase its defense by a combination of increased military spending and alliances. This decreases the security of other states (state B and C). Competition and strained political relations develop as states B and C attempt to increase their defenses by the same means as state A. State A then perceives this as an aggressive act and attempts to further increase its defenses. This leads to a defense competition among states A, B, and C. Robert Jervis termed this "spiral model" in which states go into a spiraling of defense spending and other defensive measures to offset the perceived threat. The Middle East in the 1960s witnessed a security dilemma in which case Nasser attempted to increase the security of Egypt as a response to

In order to understand the extent of Nasser's political and security dilemma, a brief history of American involvement in the region before Johnson's presidency is in order. An examination of these years provides historical context to Johnson's policies and illustrates the importance of Egypt to the postwar petroleum order. Analysis of this period also shows that Johnson did have a Middle East strategy and did not deviate from the postwar order, but continued an approach that began with President Harry S. Truman.[32] American policy towards Egypt before the Johnson administration can be divided into three periods: the pre-Nasser era from 1945 to 1952; the pre-Suez Crisis period from 1952 to 1956; and the post-Suez War period from 1956 to 1963. Let us now turn to each of the three periods that characterize American foreign policy toward the Middle East.

The Pre-Nasser Era, 1945-1952

As Americans celebrated the end of the Second World War, a new conflict developed in Mideast when the Soviet Union attempted to seize a warm water port from Turkey and oil grants from Iran.[33] In addition, Communist rebels threatened the stability of Greece's pro-Western

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Israeli and the conservative Arabs increased security measures. This resulted in a completion among them. The phrase was coined by John H Herz. See John H Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism, A Study in Theories and Realities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). Also see Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* vol. 30, no. 2 (1978): 186–214; Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 1, (1997), pp. 171-201. A security dilemma is when a politician attempts to do what is necessary to survive—such as Nasser's need to battle what he perceived as anti-Nasser forces in the Middle East, and his need to do what is necessary in domestic to maintain economic and social prosperity.

[32] Historians and other scholars of the U.S.-Middle East relations maintain that Lyndon Johnson ignored or paid little attention to the Middle East between November 1963 and the Six Day War. For this argument, see Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Alan R. Taylor, *The Superpowers and the Middle East* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Yazīd Sāyigh and Avi Shlaim, *The Cold War and the Middle East* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Michael Oren, *Six Days of War* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2002); Nigel John Ashton's edited work, *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers, 1967-73* (New York: Routledge, 2007.2007) Douglas Little's *American Orientalism: the United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); and Wm. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim, *The 1967 Arab-Israili War: Origins and Consequences* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[33] The Soviet Union and Britain occupied Iranian during the Second World War to support the war effort. After the war, London and Moscow agreed to evacuate their forces. As a result, British troops withdrew from Iran in 1945 after the Allies defeated Japan, however, Soviet troops remained and refused to leave See Louise L. Fawcett,

government. Terrified that Soviet actions in the Middle East would start another world war, President Truman endeavored to prevent Soviet encroachment into the region.[34] The White House, motivated by diplomat George F. Kennan's "Long Telegram,"[35] decided that Moscow's actions presented a threat to the postwar petroleum order and, therefore, a danger to the economic stability of Europe and the United States. [36] In a March 1947 speech to a joint session of Congress, Truman tied American national security to Mideast stability and laid down the foundations of the postwar petroleum order. In what became known as the Truman Doctrine, the president advocated containment of the Soviet Union in the region. Truman linked the defense of the Middle East to the British military bases that were established during colonial era of British rule.[37] And due to its strategic location, the Suez Canal, and the importance of its air bases, Egypt came to play a vital role in Truman's plans.[38]

As the Truman administration associated Egypt to the postwar petroleum order, the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 complicated American Cold War goals for the Middle East.[39] The struggle for Palestine originated in the migration of European Zionist to Palestine. From 1923 to 1948, Britain ruled Palestine as part of the mandate system that emerged after the First World War. In 1936, an Arab revolt foreshadowed Britain's withdrawal from Palestine, which occurred in 1947. In May 1948, Israel declared its independence and the

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Estrange, *Iran and the Cold War : the Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[34] Memorandum, The Present Situation in the Near East—a Danger to World Peace, undated, *FRUS 1946*, Vol. 7:1-6.

[35] Kennan, a Soviet specialist in the State Department, sent an 8000 word telegram to Washington explaining Soviet intentions in Europe and Asia. Kennan expanded this argument later. See X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 4(1947):566–582.

[36] Peter Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 23.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39]The Current Situation in Egypt, October 16, 1947, National Archives and Records Administration [hereafter NARA]/Central Intelligence Agency Officially Released Information System [hereafter CIA/ORIS].

Truman administration immediately recognized Zionist claims to Palestine. The First Arab-Israeli War erupted in 1948 leading to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which entangled American plans for the postwar petroleum order. As Israel struggled with its Arabs neighbors, America committed itself to Israel's survival, supplying it with arms and financing. This further confounded the conflict and strained both regional relations as well as American-Egyptian relations. Because Egypt was a strategic asset to Truman's long-term Cold War contingency plans and Israel relied on American assistance to survive, the Truman administration found itself caught between its assurances to Israel and its commitments to the postwar order.

In the midst of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the rise of anti-Western Arab nationalism in 1949, the Cold War heated up when the Soviet Union successfully detonated an atomic bomb.[40] The Truman administration responded in April 1950 with National Security Council-68 (NSC-68), which determined that Communism was a global threat to peace and recommended that the United States improve its conventional and nuclear forces to respond to this threat.[41] NSC-68 marked a watershed in American history in that it called for a more aggressive approach to the Soviet Union to win the Cold War and extended the Truman Doctrine, with its strategy of containment, globally.[42]

Despite NSC-68 and President Truman's plans to battle Communism around the world, Truman's support for Israel weakened U.S. ties with the Arab and Muslim worlds. The White House's stance on Israel opened a window for Soviet influence in the Middle East.[43] To maintain

[40] The Communist also defeated the Chinese Nationalist in China in 1949.
[41] National Security Council Report, April 14, 1950, *FRUS 1950*, Vol. 1:234-292.
[42] The foundation of NSC 68 can be traced to George Kennan and his "Long Telegram," which attempted to connect Soviet global actions as part of Russia's defense history the points Kennan made in the Long Telegram were later reiterated in *Foreign Affairs*. See X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs* 25, (1947) 4:566–582. For official U.S. policy see, "Record of the Meeting of the State-Defense Policy Review Group," February 27, 1950, *FRUS 1950*, Vol. 1:181.
[43] Little, *American Orientalism*, 124.

stability and to prevent Moscow from gaining influence among Arab and Muslim states, the White House attempted to find a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Truman's strategy emphasized an Egyptian-Israeli peace with the hope that other Arab states would follow Cairo's lead.[44]

In addition to NSC-68, Washington, in May 1950, signed the Tripartite Agreement with Britain and France. The agreement intended to strengthen the postwar petroleum order by preventing a regional arms race. The Western powers (Britain, France, and the United States) all agreed to limit offensive arms sales to the Middle East. As part of this postwar order, the White House also initiated, in 1950, a NATO-like Middle East defense pact between Egypt, Britain, and the United States.[45] Egypt was to play such a vital role to this pact that the United States even considered, in October 1950, Egyptian membership in NATO.[46] Egypt thus seemed poised to become the United States' main partner in the region.

The British leg of this new order was, however, beginning to wobble. By 1950, Britain's unstable position in the Middle East attracted the attention of both the Soviet Union and the United States. In conformity with NSC-68, Washington began to pressure London to do more to resolve its differences with Cairo. Meanwhile, Truman embarked on a diplomatic tour of Europe to persuade NATO's members to include Turkey in the alliance rather than in the Anglo-dominated Middle East Command (MEC), which was London's attempt to maintain an informal empire in the region.[47] As part of its plans for informal empire, Whitehall needed its Suez Canal military base to maintain the MEC. Whitehall, therefore, attempted to pressure Cairo to establish

[44] Memorandum of Conversation, October 19, 1950, *FRUS* 1950, Vol. 5:314.
[45] Memorandum, November 20, 1950, *FRUS*, 1950, Vol. 5:321-322.
[46] Memorandum to the Secretary of State, October 12, 1950, *FRUS 1950*, Vol. 5:303-307.
[47] Mustafa Bilgin, *Britain and Turkey in the Middle East: Politics and Influence in the Early Cold War Era* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 158.

MEC's headquarters in Suez.[48] Egyptian and Arab nationalists, however, pressured King Farouk to resist London's efforts. This attempt by Britain placed Truman in a dilemma. Throughout 1951, the White House attempted to assuage Britain on the Suez base issue while at the same time appease Egyptian nationalists. Nonetheless, events in 1952 would forever change the political landscape of Egypt and complicate the postwar petroleum order.

The Nasser Era before Suez, 1952-1956

It took six hours for the royal guard to flee and abandon the palace to the *Ḍubbāṭ al-ʾAḥrār*, (the Free Officers), and end the Mohammad Ali dynasty founded in 1805.[49] Within a few hours that fateful morning, Britain's position in Egypt began to crumble. If London had problems with the old regime of King Farouk, the Free Officers, led by Gamal Abdul Nasser, would cause the government of Prime Minister Winston Churchill immeasurable political problems.

Cairo's new regime completely rejected London's request to use Egyptian territory for the MEC's the headquarters. Britain was forced to develop a new defensive strategy that shifted the center of gravity of the MEC from Egypt to Iraq and Turkey. Known as the "triangular defense" the defensive plan called on Turkey and Iraq to play the vital role in defending the Middle East against Communism.[50] Throughout the early 1950s, the Truman administration continued to consider the Middle East as a British sphere of influence, and only attempted to buttress London's position—not replace it—in order to maintain the postwar order. Washington policymakers therefore attempted to persuade and encourage Britain to find a solution to its Egyptian problem. Since Washington considered Egypt the leader of the Arab world, the Truman administration believed that a solution to the Anglo-Egyptian impasse was required to make the

[48] Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt*, 123.
[49] Michael Clarks, "Effect of Coup in Egypt Uncertain," *New York Times,* July 26, 1952.
[50] Bilgin, *Britain and Turkey in the Middle East*, 181.

MEC workable. Truman's policymakers calculated that without Egypt, no other Arab state would join.[51] Nonetheless, Britain's triangular defense, which evolved out of MEC, materialized as the Middle Easter Defense Organization (MEDO), with Iraq and Turkey playing key roles, without Egypt.

Nasser—who slowly emerged as the real power behind the Free Officers' Revolution—also rejected Truman's approach towards Israel, which added yet another dimension to the postwar order. Israel, literally, stood in the middle of Nasser's ambitions for a pan-Arab movement, which was in its embryonic stage, and he often called the Jewish state the "greatest international crime" in the modern age.[52] When the White House considered denying Egypt a grant as a tactic to force Cairo to make peace with Israel, the State Department, shrewdly, protested that without American aid, the Cairo regime would fall resulting in regional instability and threaten Israel in the process. Israeli Prime Minster David Ben-Gurion agreed with the State Department estimate stressing, on August 18, 1952, that he believed "Egypt key" to the Arab-Israel conflict, and therefore isolating the new regime would impede a final resolution of the dispute.[53] As a result, Truman partially retracted his previous order and provided Egypt with $11 million in military aid—marking the first time, but not the last, that an American administration tied aid to a Middle Eastern country to Israel's security. [54]

When Eisenhower entered the Oval Office in 1953, Iraq, which competed with Egypt for leadership of the Arab world, formally joined the embryonic MEDO. Nonetheless, the new nationalistic regime in Cairo continued to grow in popularity among Arabs in the months that followed the Free Officers' Revolution, motivating pan-Arab nationalists to look towards Cairo

[51] Ibid.
[52] Yergin, *The Prize* 481.
[53] The Ambassador in Israel to the Department of State, August, 22, 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, Vol. 9:985-986.
[54] Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956*, 151.

for leadership, and not Baghdad. As a result of the growing completion for the hearts and minds of the Arab nationalist, both Egypt and Iraq used whatever means at their disposal to increase their popularity among the Arab nationalist. Political and military attacks against Israel became the preferred method both sides used to win popularity among Arab nationalist. They also competed for American recognition as leader of the Arab world, for the benefits of which—they both thought—meant unfettered American financial assistance. Under Eisenhower, therefore, United States found itself taking on more responsibilities in the Middle East than did Truman administration.

Soon after entering office, Eisenhower dispatched Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to tour the region and visit Arab leaders. His first stop was Cairo, thus demonstrating the importance of that country to Eisenhower's postwar petroleum order. Dulles's met with President Mohammad Naguib and Nasser to understand their concerns. The topic of discussion covered the regime's domestic concerns as well as Egypt's regional anxieties.[55] The secretary of state learned that despite social and domestic issues, both men were concerned about the future of MEDO most. Naguib told Dulles that Egypt did not see the Soviet Union as an immediate threat and, therefore, there was no need for such an alliance.[56] Despite Naguib's opinion towards the postwar order, Eisenhower, who sought to prevent the spread of Communism into the region and find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, provided Egypt with military and economic assistance to assuage Naguib and Nasser's anxieties.[57]

[55] Naguib was Egypt's first president and a figure in during the Free Officers Revolution, but real power rested with Nasser.
[56] Memorandum of Conversation, Cairo, May 11, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1953*, Vol. 4:5.
[57]Eisenhower to Naguib, July 15, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, Vol. 1:704.

First Contact

Contact between the United States and the Free Officers began as early as 1950, when many of them trained in the United States alongside NATO personnel at the Colorado Air Force base.[58] The U.S. government noticed Farouk's unpopularity in the streets of Egypt and attempted to make contact with opposition groups—the Free Officers among them—in the military. Sami Sharaf, Nasser's personal secretary, reports that it was before and during the revolution that CIA agent Kermit Roosevelt visited Cairo to improve relations between the two groups. But after the revolution Roosevelt soured the relationship when he attempted to manipulate Egyptian foreign policy by adding preconditions, such as improving relations with Israel and Jordan, in exchange for American assistance.[59] Nonetheless, this contact demonstrated Washington's early determination to keep Egypt in its sphere of influence. Indeed, Eisenhower continued throughout 1953 to believe Egypt was strategically important to the defense of the Persian Gulf and that Western control of Egypt's Suez Canal base played a leading role in that strategy.[60]

At a cost to Britain of $1.5 billion ($12.9 billion today) over the 38 years it took to build, the Suez Canal base housed the best and largest military base in the Middle East, with ten airfields and the world's largest arms despot.[61] The Anglo-Egyptian standoff over the base began during the reign of King Farouk and continued with the Free Officers' junta.[62] Negotiations revolved around the base's future and MEDO defense, which the United States and Britain

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[58] Sayed-Ahmed, Muhammad Abd el-Wahab, *Nasser and American Foreign Policy, 1952-1956* (London: LAAM, 1989), 46.
[59] Sami Sharaf, Sanawaī *wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir : shahādat Sāmī Sharaf* (Cairo: Dār al-Fursān lil-Nashr, 2005-2006), vol. 1 :176.
[60] From Eisenhower to Mohammad Naguib, July 15, 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996). Vol. XIV: 239 (8/24). Also see http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/first-term/documents/239.cfm
[61] "Egypt: Revolutionary's Rise," *Time*, May 4, 1953.
[62] There have been a number of incidents between Egypt and Britain over the Suez Canal, with the first dating to 1879 and the Urabi Revolt, but it was during Farouk's reign that the Suez Canal military base became a nationalistic issue for many Egyptians.

assumed as vital to Western containment strategy in the region. Nasser, who a year after the revolution began to assert his authority, failed to understand London's intransigence over MEDO. Instead, he wanted "complete independence" and Britain's 80,000 troops evacuated from Egyptian soil.[63]

What the new regime in Cairo most wanted was not a Western-led security organization in which Egypt played a secondary role, but one controlled by Egypt with London and Washington playing no role whatsoever. Nasser, the real leader of the Free Officers' movement, envisioned a Cairo-centered security pact of Arab states that relied and depended on itself, not outside interference.[64] Dulles discovered during his trip that the stigma of Egypt's long history of colonial domination by Britain undermined American security intentions for the region. The Free Officers remained intractable on the issue of including Britain in their defensive policy. When Dulles raised the issue again in his meeting with Naguib, the Egyptian leader pointed out Egypt's bitter past with Britain over the issue of defense. Naguib told the secretary that Britain forced Egypt into defensive pacts and as a result Egyptians equated the issue with imperialism.[65] The Egyptian president cited the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of 1936, under the terms of which Britain would build Egypt a modern army. However, the army that resulted from the treaty was "fit only for funeral celebrations."[66] Because of this, Egyptian believed that defense agreements with the West were backdoor attempts at imperialism. Therefore, any deal with Britain or any other Western state had no credibility in the country. Naguib also pointed out the fragile state of

[63] Ibid.
[64] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir,* vol. 1:275.
[65] Memorandum of Conversation, Cairo, May 11, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1953*, Vol. 4:10.
[66] Ibid.

the revolution and hinted that domestic policy drove the decision by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). [67]

To add to Washington's problems, the new regime in Cairo transformed its version of Egyptian nationalism, with its radical social agenda, to include all Arab nationalism. Nasser, the acknowledged leader of the Free Officer movement, saw all the Arab peoples from Morocco to the Persian Gulf as one nation comprised of many states, similar to the United States.[68] Nasser also hypothesized this Arab super-state as pursuing a neutral foreign policy that favored neither superpower. Yet Nasser's vision for the Middle East clashed with Washington's Cold War postwar order. What he perceived as a threat to the Near East did not translate into similar threats for Washington. Eisenhower soon learned that the new regime's opinion of the Soviet Union differed from America's. Despite this stance, Nasser did not prefer Communism to Arab nationalism. In February 1952, he demonstrated where he stood on the issue of local Communism when he began arresting Communist throughout Egypt. He even purged the Free Officers' of Communists when he evicted Captain Yussef Sadek from the RCC and placed him under house arrest.[69] Nonetheless, since Nasser did not see all Communists as one gigantic force, he continued to have relations with Communist nations around the world such as China and the Soviet Union.

For Nasser, all Arabs from the Persian Gulf to Morocco were one single people who shared a common heritage and destiny. Nasser, as he developed the ideology of Nasserism in the early 1950s, did not see the Cold War as an Arab issue. For Nasser, the obstacles to Arab unity, Israel, and Western Imperialism were more important issues than Communism in the Middle

[67] The Ruling Body of the Free Officers.
[68] Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Haykal, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser's Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels, and Statesmen* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973), 23.
[69] "And Then There Were 13," *Time*, February 2, 1953.

East.[70] The role of Arab states in the Cold War, Nasser believed, was to remain neutral and part of the nonaligned movement, which advocated neutralism in the superpower competition.[71]

In order to remove the obstacles to Arab unity Nasser believed that the conservative monarchs in the region, along with their Western allies, must be expunged and replaced with progressive republican regimes. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Iraq, and Libya all part of this old order were targeted by Nasser as he tried to establish the republican order in the Middle East. The British presence in the Persian Gulf, France's occupation of Algeria, and Israel's existence all posed problems to Nasser's plans. These were more pressing matters than the international conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States.

By 1954, Nasser's vision for the Middle East clashed with the Anglo-American MEDO strategy, which was seen by Nasser as a tool of the Cold War to maintain the postwar petroleum order. The Eisenhower White House approached regional defense in two ways. First, the White House sought stability through the active promotion of an Anglo-Egyptian agreement and Arab-Israeli peace. Second, the administration sought to build a defensive alliance along the northern tier of the Near East that at one time included Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq.[72] Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles wanted Egypt to play a prominent role in this plan because they believed that wherever Cairo went, the Arabs would follow.[73] To mollify Nasser, the Eisenhower administration ignored Nasser's Arab nationalism, and pursued its own Cold War agenda by attempting to encourage London to settle the Suez Canal base dispute that had festered since the

[70] Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: the Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 31.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt,* 181.
[73] Ibid.

end of the Second World War. By doing this, Eisenhower and Dulles believed they could persuade Nasser to the see the Cold War as America saw it.

Nonetheless, Eisenhower found Nasser intransigent on issues such as arms control, Arab nationalism, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. By 1955, Nasser began to pursue an anti-Western-pan-Arab agenda and to assert his independence from Washington. In Eisenhower opinion, Nasser's drift from Washington's sphere of influence benefited only Moscow. In April 1955, Nasser threw the first blow against the White House's postwar order when he overtly sided with the nonalignment movement. Then in May 1956, he recognized the Peoples' Republic of China. Finally, greatly in need of arms to balance Israel's growing military superiority and feeling rejected by the Western powers, Nasser turned to the Soviet Union. The White House, concerned with its own security needs in the region, overlooked Nasser's defense requirements. At home and abroad, three issues influenced Nasser's decision making when it came to his relationship with the West: imperialism in Egypt and the Middle East, Western capitalistic influence in the Arab world, and the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on Egypt's domestic and regional politics—especially when it came to American-Egyptian relations. Let us now discuss each of these three issues.

The British Presence

The British question was extremely important for Egypt. Britain's military occupation during the Second World War and the heavy-handed measures that it had inflicted as a result of the war still weighed heavily on Egyptians. The immense domestic pressure on the RCC, compounded with their own personal experience during the war, affected the decision making of

the ruling body.[74] Nasser and the RCC agreed with the populace that Britain's presence in the country constituted a continuation of colonial rule. Because they anticipated the public outcry against the British presence, the RCC knew it needed domestic support. In response, Nasser and the RCC formed an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood, which was then one of the most popular political groups in Egypt, in order to gain popular support for the regime.[75] Nonetheless, the White House was unaware of, or assigned little importance to, the domestic pressure inside Egypt against both Britain and Israel.

Western Influence

The impact of Western capitalistic and political influence in the Arab world was the second issue that affected Nasser's decision making. Nasser wanted Egypt to play the key role in regions oil resources and in any security pact for the region. Intra-Arab rivalry between Egypt and Iraq that dated to 1920s, when both Baghdad and Cairo competed for leadership of Arab nationalism, played an important part in Nasser's outlook. During the Cold War, this rivalry resurfaced, as the Iraqi-centered Baghdad Pact threatened to isolate Cairo from the Arab world. By February 1955, the Baghdad Pact materialized around a Turkish-Iraqi centered defense for the Middle East. Uncertainty about American politico-military aims in the regional ran high because Cairo viewed the pact as cover for Anglo-Iraqi intentions and a challenge to Egyptian leadership of the Arab world. Moreover, Turkish involvement further complicated the matter because of the turbulent past both countries shared.[76] Eisenhower attempted to restrain Nasser

[74] All the Free Officers' cite the British Raid on the Royal Palace of February 4, 1942 as the decisive moment in their lives.
[75] Ali Ashamo, *al-Tarkh al-Srie le-Gamhat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn: Mithkarat Ali Ashamo* (Cairo: Dar al-Halal, 1992), 47.
[76] Egypt was part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire during the 19th century, and many Egyptians suffered from poverty and discrimination under the Turkish ruling class.

from attacking the Baghdad Pact by offering him American financial incentives, but the Egyptian leader would not be appeased.[77]

In addition to the Baghdad Pact, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said wanted to prevent Nasser from using Mideast oil to implement his Nasserist agenda. Since the Free Officers' revolution, Nasser had always wanted to control the oil wealth of the region. In an effort to modernize Egypt's economy, Nasser hoped that the "haves" would share their oil wealth with the "have nots." Nasser attempted to use the region's oil wealth for his own Arab nationalist agenda. In the early 1950s, he held a series of "Arab Oil Experts" meetings in Cairo that discussed, among other things, the use of oil as an economic weapon and the best way to counterbalance Western influence when it came to the region's petroleum wealth.[78]

The Israeli Factor

The third issue that affected Nasser's decision making towards his relations with the West was Israel. Nasser and many of the Free Officers served in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948—Israel's war of independence. During the final days of the conflict in July 1948, the Egyptian 6th Infantry Battalion and its commanding staff officer, Nasser, after putting up a stubborn defense, found themselves trapped at *Isdud* in the Negev west of Gaza.[79] In July, the UN brokered a second truce between the Arabs and Israelis. However, the Egyptian forces cut off Israeli supply lines. In response, Israel violated the ceasefire in order to supply her forces and ultimately defeated the besieged Egyptian forces.[80] Nasser's experiences in Palestine shaped his attitude

[77] Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, 183-184.
[78] Yergin, *The Prize,* 491.
[79] Gamal Abdul Nasser, *Memoirs of the First Palestine* War, trans. Walid Khalidi, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 18, (1973): 3-32.
[80] Avi Shlaim*, The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 39.

towards Israel, which he saw as an alien Western surrogate aimed at keeping the Arabs under foreign control and preventing Arab unity.

Due to Palestinian infiltrators mounting cross-border raids into Israel from Gaza, the rivalry between Israel and Egypt escalated when Israel, in 1954, launched a clandestine terror operation in Cairo and Alexandria.[81] As Egypt appeared to be gaining ground in an Anglo-Egyptian agreement for London's withdrawal from Egypt, Israel grew worried that a British withdrawal from Suez would free the Egyptian army to mount an attack on Israel. A nascent intelligence arm of the Israel Defense Force (IDF), named Unit 131, found the solution to Israel's problem: a false flag operation against Western targets throughout Egypt would demonstrate Nasser's anti-Western penchants. When Nasser's agents captured the spy ring and forced a confession, Israel denied any involvement, but the debates in Jerusalem over the affair confirmed its involvement. Instead of issuing an apology to Nasser, the Israelis decided on a more aggressive stance against him.[82]

On July 11, 1954, Israel attacked *Dier al-Balah*, an Egyptian stronghold in Gaza, killing six Egyptian soldiers as part of this new strategy. It pushed the region to the brink of war.[83] In the months that followed, Jerusalem continued to challenge Cairo. On September 18, 1954, Jerusalem ordered the *Bat Galim*, an Israeli ship, to run the Egyptian blockade at the Suez Canal, which was quickly seized and the crew imprisoned. Then the Egyptians executed the men that were involved in the *Esek Besh* affair.

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[81] Israelis call this raid *Esek Besh* (the Bad Affair), while Egyptians refer to as the *al-jawāsīs al-Ṣihyūnīyah* (the Zionist Spies). The infiltrators were refugees returning to their homes to see relatives that were left behind during the Arab-Israeli war in 1948; however, by the early 1950s they were used as political weapon to carry out guerrilla attacks against Israel. For details on Israel and the infiltrators, see Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
[82] "Record Meeting on the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement," 3 August 1954, 24446/8, (Southern Branch) Israel State Archives [hereafter ISA].
[83] "Worst Blows Egypt Says," *New York Times*, July 12, 1954.

The White House concluded that Israeli actions endangered Western defensive interests in the area and the need for an all-inclusive Arab-Israeli peace became associated with Western security interests. In early 1955, the United States initiated Operation Alpha—a comprehensive Egyptian-Israeli peace proposal—in an attempt to save Washington's regional defensive plans.[84] Initially, the effort worked and Nasser, to a certain extent, did accommodate Washington and Jerusalem on certain issues. For instance, Nasser agreed to release the crew of the *Bat Galim*, and his political propaganda against Israel decreased as well as attempts to control border raids.[85] Nasser even accepted high level peace negations with Israel, but the Israelis refused because they doubted Nasser's sincerity.[86]

An incident on January 25 between Israeli farmers and Arab infiltrators resulted in the death of an Israeli farmer and two Arab *fedayeen*[87] who were probably Palestinian refugees or members of the Muslim Brotherhood.[88] Israel blamed Nasser and on February 2, a reprisal raid killed two Egyptian soldiers when the Israeli forces crossed into Gaza.[89] As hostilities spiraled, the uneasy truce that had lasted since 1949 was broken. On a cold January night, Israeli forces led by Ariel Sharon, a future prime minister of Israel, crossed the Demilitarized Zone (DZ) in a two-pronged attack across the Gaza strip.[90] Before the night was over, the 25-mile Gaza strip lay smoldering, as 38 Egyptians were killed and many more wounded. Sharon's paratroopers left a scene of devastation behind with buildings in ruins and *Rafah's*[91] main water-pumping station in shambles.[92]

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[84] Telegram, January 5, 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, Vol. 14:2.
[85] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 121.
[86] Ibid.
[87] literally, those who sacrifice for the cause.
[88] "Israeli Killed in Attack," *New York Times*, January 26, 1955:3.
[89] "Egyptian Soldier Slain," *New York Times*, February 3, 1955:6.
[90] "Inquiry on Gaza Raid," *The Times of London,* March 7, 1955:8.
[91] Rafah is one of Gaza's main cities.
[92] Ibid.

Following the Israeli offensive, massive demonstrations broke out in the Arab world, with Palestinian refugees in Gaza going on a rampage targeting Egyptian and UN offices. From North Africa to the Persian Gulf, Arabs demanded Cairo retaliate for the Israeli raid or at least provide weapons to the Palestinians so they could defend themselves. Pressure mounted on Nasser to retaliate and he desperately searched for answers to the Israeli raid—yet Nasser knew that his lack of weapons left him in no position to attack.[93] As a result, Nasser's standing at home and in the region plummeted. The raid demonstrated the Egyptian army's weakness against Israel. Rumors and conspiracies within the Egyptian military spread and some within the army alluded to replacing Nasser if did not repay the Israelis for the attack.[94] Aware that similar grievances by the Free Officers' led to Farouk's downfall, Nasser desperately searched for answers to his predicament. Nasser's trouble at home and abroad suggests that his next move resulted from desperation and necessity rather than from official policy.

The Gaza raid forced Nasser to reassess his attitude towards Israel and the West. After the attack on Gaza, Nasser's domestic priorities switched from social reforms to military reforms, which marked the beginning of the arms race in the Middle East.[95] If Nasser concentrated more on social issues than foreign policy before the Israeli offensive, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion showed him that investing in "hospitals and schools" would not prevent another attack. Instead, Nasser needed weapons and he needed them fast.[96] He first turned to the Americans for arms, but under the terms of the Tripartite Agreement, Washington refused. Nasser's intelligence chief, Muhammad al-Tawil, in June 1955, emphasized the need for arms so that they could defend themselves against the Israelis, but hoped that talk of a deal with the

[93] Heikal, *Cairo Documents*, 27.
[94]Robert C. Doty, *New York Times*, March 6, 1955: E4
[95] Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, 126.
[96] Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Heikal, *Cutting the Lions Tale*, (London: A. Deutsch, 1986), 66-67.

Soviet Union would persuade the United States to give arms to Egypt.[97] However, when the Americans remained inflexible, he turned to the other superpower—the Soviet Union.

Nasser's foreign policy outlook also changed as a result of the Israeli attack. He began to look for allies in the Middle East and beyond to balance Israel's growing power. Two days before the Israeli raid, Nasser dispatched Salah Salem, the minster of national guidance, to Damascus to discuss an "Arab Pact," to challenge the Anglo-Turkish-Iraqi Baghdad Pact.[98] These talks resulted in a mutual all-Arab alliance between Syria and Egypt and would eventually lay the groundwork for the United Arab Republic. Lebanon and Jordan were both asked to join, but they decided to remain neutral. Before Israel's raid, Nasser looked at Israel with indifference, and he attempted to curb border raids by *Fedayeen* fighters. However, this attitude changed after January 25, when Cairo began supplying them with financial and military support.

In one swift move, Nasser single-handedly ended the Western monopoly of arms supplies to the Middle East and increased Moscow's influence in the region.[99] The Soviet arms deal effectively marked the beginning of the end of the Anglo-dominated Baghdad Pact. The Eisenhower White House that looked towards Nasser for leadership in the Middle East decided to "convince" Nasser through aggressive diplomacy that he could not seek closer ties with the Soviet Union and continue to "receive most-favored-nation treatment" from the United States.[100] In evaluating American-Egyptian relations up to this point, it can be assessed that the Arab-Israeli conflict made it incongruous for the West to set up a Middle Eastern defense. Nasser saw

[97] Muhammad al-Tawil, *Lu'bat al-umam wa-'Abd al-Nāṣir* (al-Qāhirah: al-Maktab al-Miṣrī al-Ḥadīth, 1986), 149.
[98] Telegram from the Embassy in Egypt, March 1, 1955, *FRUS 1955-1957*, vol. 14:78-79.
[99]Intelligence Report: Soviet Military Aid to the United Arab Republic, 1955-1966, March 1967, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[100] Memorandum from the Secretary of State (Dulles) to the President (Eisenhower), March 28, 1956, *FRUS 1955-1957*, Vol. 15:419.

American support for Israel and its vision for the region as a direct affront to his security concerns, which were a key part of his Arab nationalist agenda.[101]

Nasser's decision to accept arms from the Soviet bloc persuaded the United States to decide against funding the Aswan Dam, which Cairo regarded as the solution to its financial problems. Next, Washington and London agreed to carry out Operation Omega, which was a strategy to isolate Nasser, but also to provide him a link back to the West to prevent further Soviet penetration. The strain in relations between Nasser and America's Western allies and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) backing away from funding the Aswan Dam, led Nasser to favor nationalizing the Suez Canal on July 25, 1956—the anniversary of the Free Officers' Revolution that toppled King Farouk—sidelining Britain's involvement in Egypt and the Middle East.[102] Wanting to prevent Moscow from taking advantage of the crisis, Eisenhower attempted to negotiate a deal between Cairo and London. In October 1956, the Middle East once again became unstable, as Britain, France, and Israel attacked Egypt to begin the second Arab-Israeli war with the aim to end Nasser's rule in Egypt.[103] The Eisenhower administration found itself in the novel situation of siding with the Soviet Union at the UN. To maintain the status quo ante, Eisenhower pressured America's traditional allies and Israel to withdraw from Egypt or face economic consequences.[104]

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[101] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1:275.
[102] For a detailed account of the Suez Crisis, see Keith Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), which provides a comprehensive study of the crisis and the reasons behind it.
[103] Minutes of the Egypt Committee, 3rd Meeting, 30 July 1956, Cabinet Office [hereafter CAB] 134/1216, The National Archives of the UK [hereafter TNA].
[104] Eisenhower was unwilling to go as far as economic sanctions, but he did order a run on the British pound sterling, which forced Britain to withdraw. See Diane B. Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) for Eisenhower's economic policy towards Britain, France, and Israel during the Suez Crisis.

The Post-Suez Era, 1956-1963

Although Nasser's defense forces were swept aside by the Israeli offensive, and nothing lay between the Israeli army and Cairo, the Egyptian premier won a political victory that made him "the champion of Arab nationalism" for ending decades of British and French dominance in the region. [105] Throughout the late 1950s, the golden age of Nasserism seemed to threaten and destabilize the region and swing the Middle Eastern door wide-open to Soviet penetration.[106] Revolution and counterrevolutions broke out and led to instability. The Eisenhower administration placed blame for American setbacks in the region squarely on the Egyptian leader. This stance increased the hostility between Washington and Cairo and climaxed with the Eisenhower Doctrine, which emphasized the importance of the Middle East to the United States and world peace. Under the terms of the doctrine, Eisenhower promised American economic and military assistance to any Middle Eastern state threatened by "alien forces hostile to freedom."[107]

The Eisenhower Doctrine was the White House's attempts to maintain the postwar petroleum order by targeting two forces in the region: the Soviet Union and Nasserism. After determining that Nasser was profoundly antagonistic to U.S. interests, the Eisenhower administration developed a new strategy of supporting the conservative regimes of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Yemen, and Libya against progressive ones. This strategy led in 1957 to direct

[105] National Intelligence Estimate, "Outlook for the United Arab Republic," May 19, 1966, NARA/ CIA/ORIS; Israel's Prime Minster David Ben-Gurion also confided in his diary during the Suez Crisis Israel's desires to reshape the region with a Christian Lebanon state in the north and Jordanian-Iraq state that would challenge Nasser's Egypt, Diary of Ben Gurion, October 22, 1956, at Ben-Gurion Archives [hereafter BGA], (Southern Branch) ISA.
[106] Both Arabs and Westerns called Nasser's own version of pan-Arab nationalism Nasserism.
[107] Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East, January 5, 1957, vol. 34, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=11007&st=middle+east&st1=.htm

confrontation between Nasser's radical Arab nationalism, the conservative pro-Western Arabs, and the Eisenhower Doctrine.[108]

The political crises of 1957 and 1958 began with an Israeli attempt to intervene in Jordan's domestic affairs. Then in June 1958, pro-Nasser street riots stunned the pro-Western regimes of King Hussein of Jordan and President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon, leading to Anglo-American intervention with American marines landing in Beirut and British paratroopers in Amman, Jordan to secure the conservative governments. Then in July1958, Iraqi Free Officers led by Abdul Kareem Qassim, whose ideology was loosely based on Nasserism, successful staged a coup d'état against the pro-Western government of King Faisal and Prime Minster Nuri Said. By December 1958, Qassim sought closer relations with the Soviet Union, thus enabling it to establish a foothold in the Middle East.[109]

The Suez Crisis, Qassim's rise to power, and the union between Syria and Egypt, known as the United Arab Republic (UAR), brought the downfall of a conservative-led-Western-backed defense organization in the region. The *coup de grâce* to conservative defense came when Saudi Arabia and Jordan joined Egypt and Syria to form the Collective Security Pact, which rivaled the Western-backed conservative defense. The administration's unsuccessful efforts to stop the spread of Nasserism under the Eisenhower Doctrine attested to the failure of the strategy. If the Suez Crisis in 1956 ended European imperialism in the Middle East and announced the dawn of the Nasser's political domination in the region, the turmoil of 1957-1958 demonstrated to

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[108] This argument is offered in Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*. Malcolm Kerr refers to this era as the Arab cold war. See Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[109] The center of the ill-fated Baghdad Pact, which was supposed to be a NATO-like alliance for the Middle East, was Iraq. The United States intended Iraq to play an important role in the U.S. strategy against Communism in the region. For more on the Baghdad Pact and the Anglo-American politics and defense policy behind it in the early 1950s, see B. Yesilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defense Policies in the Middle East, 1950-59* (New York: Psychology Press, 2005).

Washington that Nasserism dominated the Arab streets. In order for the United States to maintain the postwar petroleum order and have in place a defense to contain Soviet influence, Eisenhower decided to work with Nasser, instead of against him.[110]

The opportunity to work with Nasser opened when relations between Moscow and Cairo soured. In 1958, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev hosted Nasser in Moscow to improve bilateral relations. But when Khrushchev revealed his dissatisfaction with Nasser's anti-Communist policies, especially in the newly-formed UAR, Nasser refused to compromise on the matter.[111] The strain in Egyptian-Soviet relations presented an opportunity to the White House. By the end of the year, Eisenhower decided that opposition to Nasserism no longer worked and that rapprochement between the United States and the UAR would be appropriate.[112]

In conformity with NSC 5820/1 and Truman's postwar petroleum order, the Eisenhower administration determined that oil was the key commodity for Western security and that its free flow to Europe transcended all other needs.[113] With this in mind, the White House decided that U.S. security interests in the region would be better served if Washington worked with Nasserism instead of against it. [114] Although Washington policy makers thought Nasser exploited American aid and goodwill, Washington decided that working with him would be better because of his popularity in the Arab world.[115] Besides, Eisenhower's gambit in 1957 to replace Nasser with King Saud of Saudi Arabia as leader of the Arab world failed due to American misunderstanding of Arab culture.[116] American policy makers determined that if the United

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[110] Yuqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, 237-238.
[111] Haikel, *Cairo Documents*, 125.
[112] Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, 254.
[113] U.S. Policy Toward the Near East, November 4, 1958, *FRUS 1958-1960*, Vol. 12:188.
[114] Ibid., 189.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Eisenhower thought he could replace Saud with Nasser because he believed Saud had religious authority due to his stewardship of Mecca and Medina; see Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism*, 103; for a thorough examination of Western perceptions of the Middle East see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

States wished to portray itself as "friend of Arab nationalism," it had to get close to Nasser.[117] By supporting him through aid and "economic development" Washington hoped to win "leverage" with Nasser to manipulate his policy.[118] The administration also determined that Nasser was the strongest Arab leader and no alternative "at the present time" existed in the Arab world to sustain the postwar petroleum order.

NSC 5820/1 exposed Washington's plans towards Nasser. Since overt US opposition to Arab nationalism would strengthen and not weaken the movement, and since the movement was inimical to American interests, the Eisenhower administration determined that the movement had to be circumscribed while appearing to favor it.[119] In other words, the United States hoped to weaken Nasserism by getting close to it. Concerning Israel, NSC 5820/1 judged that steps should be taken to make the United States appear "convincing to the Arabs that the US is less pro-Israel and more impartial in our policy, but overall objective is to assure the independence of Israel" without appearing so and make an effort at a peaceful resolution of the conflict so as not to give the Nasserist ammunition to target Israel.[120]

In his final years in office, Eisenhower attempted to work with Nasser by finding common ground on certain issues. Nonetheless, the White House found that some of Nasser's actions were too dangerous for the Middle East oil complex and opposed him on these issues. One area where Eisenhower and Nasser disagreed was Africa. Nasser saw Cairo as the capital of a united Africa.[121] From December 1957 to January 1958, Nasser hosted the Afro-Asians

[117] Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism,* 148.
[118] Ibid., 149.
[119] Ibid., 150.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Gamal Abdul Nasser, *The Philosophy of a Revolution* (Cairo: Dar al-Maaref, 1959), 76-77.

Solidarity Conference in an attempt to form an international political order that was an alternative to the postwar petroleum order.

Despite Nasser's flirtation with African unity and nonalignment, relations with the West continued to improve. On September 26, 1960, Nasser arrived in the United States to attend the UN General Assembly meeting. That morning, Nasser met British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, which marked the first step in an Anglo-Egyptian rapprochement since the Suez War in 1956.[122] At 4:30 in the afternoon in New York's Waldorf Tower Hotel, Nasser sat with Eisenhower for the first time.

In his meeting with Nasser, Eisenhower stressed the importance of the UN to international peace and stability.[123] He then asked the Egyptian leader to work through the UN to solve the problems of Africa and the Middle East. The meeting was a milestone in American-Egyptian relations because the two leaders agreed on certain issues such as the need for the UN and the dangers of Soviet influence in the Middle East and Africa. However, they disagreed on the degree of American and British involvement in the in the Middle East and Africa. The meeting closed with a discussion on food-aid to Egypt, the Palestinian refugee problem, and the Mideast arms race.[124]

Eisenhower's last year in office saw profound improvements in American-Egyptian relations. By the end of Eisenhower's term, Egypt seemed to agree with America's postwar order in the region and relations with the West appeared to vastly improve. Before he left office,

[122] Haykal, *The Cairo Documents*, 188.
[123] Five days before his meeting with Nasser, Eisenhower emphasized to the General Assembly the UN's importance to world peace.
[124] Memorandum of Conversation with President Nasser, September 26, 1960, *FRUS 1958-1960*, Vol. 13:600-605.

Eisenhower rewarded Cairo with $110 million in food aid under the Public Law (PL) 480 as a diplomatic tool to keep Nasser in the American camp.

Kennedy's "Cool but Correct Policy"[125]

Before the new administration settled into the White House, Nasser contacted Kennedy on February 20, 1961, stating his concerns about the crisis in the Congo, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Palestinian refugees.[126] By 1961, Nasser's relations with the Western powers were improving, and in February of that year, for instance, he sent and received messages from Paris, London, and Washington. Nasser's message to Kennedy disclosed Cairo's concern for the new American president's stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

That February, the Kennedy White House noted that Nasser's popularity among the conservative Arab leaders was at its nadir and there seemed to be a "roll back" for Nasserism among the conservative Arabs.[127] The new administration calculated that Nasser would perhaps seek to look elsewhere to spread his ideology, perhaps Africa.[128] Washington's anxiety was proven correct when *al-Ahram*, Egypt's main Arabic newspaper, announced on February 20 that the Egyptian-dominated Arab League decided to open offices in West Africa, starting with Lagos, Liberia.[129]

After carefully assessing American policy towards Egypt and the Arab world, the Kennedy administration decided to continue the policies of the previous administration as stated under NSC 5820/1. On February 8, UAR Ambassador Mustafa Kamel was invited to meet with Secretary of State Dean Rusk to discuss Mideast problems. On the Arab-Israeli issue, the two

[125] John S. Badeau Oral History, February 25, 1969, JFKL, JFK Oral History Collection [hereafter JFKLOH], 01.
[126] Nasser to Kennedy, February 20, 1961, NSF, United Arab Republic [hereafter UAR], Box 169, JFKL.
[127] Memorandum of Conversation, February 16, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1962*, Vol. 17:26-31.
[128] Ibid.
[129] *Al-Ahram,* February 20, 1961, p. 1.

agreed that their respective differences over the conflict could not be solved immediately and that they would be better served by "freezing" the issue and concentrating on mutual interests.[130]

Kennedy next held a meeting with Viscount Samuel Hood, minster of the British Embassy in Washington, to discuss the current situation in the region to coordinate Anglo-American diplomacy towards Nasser. They both agreed that it would be in the West's interest to go along with the Eisenhower administration's assessment as stated in NSC 5820/1 and not pressure Nasser.[131] In May, Kennedy sent Nasser a letter declaring that the new Democratic administration would work closely with him. The letter expressed Kennedy's concern for Middle Eastern problems, including Palestinian refugees, water resources, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and economic aid to the UAR. [132]

By arranging the meeting with Kamel to minimize disagreements on certain political issues, Kennedy shrewdly persuaded Nasser that the United States actually cared about Egyptian interests when what really mattered to him was American policy.[133] Moreover, Kennedy convinced Nasser that he understood that domestic and regional issues limited Nasser's freedom of action.[134] On the matter of Middle Eastern defense, Nasser was forthright in his response to Kennedy's letter. The Egyptian leader explained that the Cold War was a Soviet-American conflict and that the Arab world had its own problems to deal with then side with one side or the other.[135]

In June, a National Security Estimate (NSE) informed Kennedy that the trends that shook the Middle East in 1958 were the "shape of the future of the Arab world": the conservative

[130] Memorandum of Conversation, February 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1962*, Vol. 17:18.
[131] Memorandum of Conversation, February 13, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1962*, Vol. 17:22-23.
[132] Kennedy to Nasser, May 11, 1916, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 17:110-113.
[133] John S. Badeau Oral History, JFKOH, February 25, 1969, 7-9.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Nasser to Kennedy, August 22, 1961, JFKL, JFKPOF-127-001.

governments of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Yemen would one day be replaced with Nasserist-style governments that would pursue a foreign policy that was "broadly comparable to Nasser's.[136] Due to the NSE, Kennedy believed that sooner rather than later, the conservative regimes would be expunged from the Middle East. Therefore, the United States had to find a ways to appease the Nasserist to protect the postwar order.[137]

An occasion presented itself when Egyptian-Soviet relations deteriorated and Egyptian students in the Soviet Union were harassed by their Soviet hosts. Kennedy saw this as an opportunity to improve American-Egyptian relations at the expense of the Kremlin. The White House quickly dispatched its full diplomatic force, setting up a one-on-one between Kamel and Secretary of State Rusk to offer to take the students into the United States as part of Kennedy's global education initiative. In 1961, Egyptian students were admitted to the United States under the Institute of International Education. The following year, the Cultural Relations Agreement was signed signaling a new era in American-Egyptian Relations.[138]

Another program that Kennedy introduced to advance American-Egyptian relations was the Abu Simbel project, which was intended to help the Egyptians move the "Nubian Monuments" that were threatened to be flooded due to the completion of Aswan. The administration used private and public diplomacy as well as providing American expertise and funding to move the monuments upriver.[139] Even some members of Congress seemed to support Kennedy's initiatives. For instance, in late November 1961, Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN)

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[136] NSE, Box 6, "Nasser and the Future of Arab Nationalism," June 27, 1961, JFKL.
[137] Peter Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States in the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2005), 44.
[138] Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, 196-197.
[139] President's Office Files, Box 104, February 1, 1961, JFKL.

traveled to Egypt on a Congressional diplomatic initiative to develop closer economic and cultural ties.[140]

Although neither Nasser, nor Arabs in general, fully understood how the American government worked and whenever Congress presented legislation that was anti-Egyptian or pro-Israel, Arabs would generally blame the president. John Badeau, as ambassador to Egypt, tried to explain the American system during his tenure in Egypt, but to no avail. Egyptians thought of the U.S. government as "a fearful and wonderful creature."[141] But Kennedy's approach to Nasser was successful. At the nonalignment conference in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1961, for instance, Nasser toned down his anti-American rhetoric. His speech was more neutral and spoke more of "international peace and security . . . stubborn conflict between the blocs," and vaguely covered the "liberation of Africa and Asia," from imperialism.[142] The cultural and economic diplomacy of the Kennedy administration was successful. And although Egyptians did not understand the American system, they thought that Kennedy was straightforward and had good intentions when it came to Egyptian affairs. Nasser too believed Kennedy genuine and acknowledged Kennedy a friend who truly wanted to solve the Arab-Israeli issue and improve American-Arab relations.[143] Nasserism began to decline in late 1961 when a coup in Syria ended the UAR.[144] Then in February 1962, relations between Egypt and the conservative regimes of Jordan and Saudi Arabia were at their lowest point, and they proposed to move the headquarters of the Arab League from Cairo to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.[145] By March, Nasser's prestige had deteriorated to the point that seven conservative Arab governments (Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunis, Libya,

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[140] Files of Robert Komer, NSF Box 51, December 13, 1961, LBJL.
[141] John S. Badeau Oral History JFKOH, February 25, 1969, JFKL.
[142]Nasser's Speech at Belgrade Conference, September 3, 1961, NSF, Box 439, JFKL.
[143] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1:286.
[144] Nasser continued to refer to Egypt as the UAR after the coup in Syria that split the two nations apart; see Haykal, *Ḥarb al-thalāthīn sanah*, Sanawāt al-ghalayān, vol. 2 (Cairo: al-Ahrām, 1988), 554.
[145] British Embassy in Cairo to London, February 12, 1962, Foreign Office [hereafter FO] 371/163976, TNA.

Morocco, Sudan, and Kuwait) found the strength to oppose Nasser and decided to hold the next Arab League summit in Riyadh instead of Cairo.[146] Then in autumn 1962 the Intra-Arab political crises between Egypt and Saudi Arabia turned into a proxy war when Nasser, seeing an opportunity to regain Egyptian prestige, dispatched troops to aid the Yemeni Free Officers' Movement, and Saudi Arabia sent military and material support to the conservative forces (more on the Yemeni civil war in Chapter 3).[147]

Conclusion

After the Second World War, the United States built and attempted to maintain the postwar petroleum order to contain Communism and Arab nationalism in the Middle East. Through its efforts to build a NATO-like alliance system to sustain the Middle East oil complex, the United States encountered two main obstacles: Nasserism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since 1945, Washington policymakers saw Egypt as key to this strategy. But in the early 1960s, due to intra-Arab politics, American lobbyists, and Congressional opposition, the Kennedy administration found it increasingly difficult to sustain Eisenhower's approach to Nasser. After Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Johnson inherited the problems faced by Kennedy in sustaining the postwar order in the Mideast, and despite the Vietnam conflict, Johnson's policy makers found themselves facing similar challenges in the dealing with Nasser.

[146]Address to the FO, No. 179, March 26, 1962, FO 371/163976/0019, TNA.
[147] Sami Sharaf, Sanawāt *wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir : shahādat Sāmī Sharaf* (Cairo: Dār al-Fursān lil-Nashr, 2005-2006), vol. 2 :622.

CHAPTER THREE

NASSER'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PREDICAMENTS

I knew that participating in a foreign pact would isolate our own nationalist elements and leave leadership of the people to either the Communist or the fanatical movements such as the Moslem Brotherhood.
-Gamal Abdul Nasser[148]

In 1958, Arab nationalists in Beirut, Lebanon attacked the supporters of Lebanese President Camille Chamoun. Chamoun had attempted—in violation of the Lebanese constitution—to run for a second term.[149] As the nationalists demonstrated against Chamoun in Lebanon, a revolution—that seemed to the White House as Nasser-inspired—swept through Iraq, and an attempted coup in Jordan almost brought the downfall of King Hussein. For the Eisenhower administration, it seemed that Nasserism was sweeping the Middle East. To Whitehall, this spate of pan-Arab nationalism in July 1958 was a result of the failed Anglo-French Suez invasion in 1956, which marked the symbolic beginning of Nasser's journey to become a latter-day Salah al-din.[150] Prime Minster Harold Macmillan surmised, that unless the mistake of 1956 is correct, Nasserism would engulf the entire region and threaten the postwar petroleum order.[151] According to Macmillan the only way to correct the problem was to "kill Nasser."[152] In January 1958, Macmillan's fears seemed palpable when Nasser—like Salah al-Din before him—united Egypt and Syria in January 1958. However, the union between Egypt and

[148] *Al-Ahram*, July 23, 1955.
[149] Chamoun and Nasser both came to power in 1952. Chamoun became Lebanon's second president in September 1952. In 1958 Chamoun illegally tried to run for a second term as president, which the Lebanese constitution prohibited. See The Chargé in Lebanon (Lobenstine) to the Department of State, September 23, 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, Vol. 9:1008-1009. See also *FRUS 1958-1960*, Vol. 11 for background to the Lebanese Crisis in 1958
[150] Salah al-Din was the 12th century Muslim leader who captured Jerusalem and united the Arab-Muslim world. Saladin was seen as a symbol of anti-imperialism in the 20th century. Nasser was often depicted after the Suez Crisis as the new Salah al-Din by Western and Middle Eastern sources. See CIA Memorandum: the Arab World, the USSR, and the West, March 12, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[151] CAB/195/17, TNA.
[152] Ibid.

Syria is symbolic in Egyptian history as the beginning of the end of Nasser's dream of pan-Arabism—a journey that ended in 1967.[153] To the outside world, Nasserism and the UAR appeared to be the future of the Middle East, where the postwar petroleum could be controlled not from Washington, but from Cairo. Nevertheless, beneath the surface Nasser faced domestic and regional challenges that threatened Nasserism.

This chapter examines the start of Nasser's domestic and regional problems, which leads to the start of his political and security dilemma. I argue that Nasser faced problems that were similar to Lyndon Johnson's problems at home. Like Lyndon Johnson—although not on the same scale—Nasser had to deal with domestic issues. In addition to forces within Egypt, political challenges in the Middle East shaped his attitude towards the Cold War and the West. Nonetheless, the Johnson administration was split between those who supported Nasser and those who were against him.

Nasser's Dilemma

Both Kennedy and Johnson understood that Nasser had to deal with domestic issues and, often times, he had to react to events at home by seeking regional issues.[154] Congress manipulated by the Oil and Israel lobbies found fault in Nasser's approach. For instance, certain members of the House and Senate accused Nasser of squandering U.S. funds for imperialistic purposes or aiding the Soviet Union increase its influence in the Middle East.[155] In the House

[153] Said K. Aburish, *Nasser: the Last Arab* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 187. See also Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1972), 245.
[154] For the Kennedy administrations concern see Memorandum from Robert W. Komer to McGeorge Bundy, September 14, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:96; for the Johnson administration's concern see National Intelligence Estimate, Washington, May 19, 1966, *FRUS 1964-67*, Vol. 18:584.
[155] House Committee on Un-American Activities, *Communist activities in the Chicago Area*, United States Congress, Committee on Un-American Activities: House of Representatives, 89th Cong., 1st S., 1965 United States Congressional Record [hereafter USCR] (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1965), 30.

debates, Congressmen accused "the Castro of the Nile" of following the same path as "Hitler."[156] In the Senate, Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska accused the White House of "appeasement" for its approach to Nasser.[157] Democratic Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri went further at a Chicago news conference that was held prior to a meeting to raise funds among Jewish supporters when he explained that, "There will be no real peace in the Middle East until [Gamal Abdel] Nasser is out of power," and to impress his host further he said Israel was "justified" in its action at Suez in 1956.[158] The American media mirrored these Congressional attacks by accusing "the Dictator" of peddling heedless anti-Americanism as a fundamental instrument of his foreign policy.[159] The *New York Daily News* went further and referred to Nasser as a "little Hitler."[160]Allen Dulles, the director of the CIA in the Eisenhower administration, attempted to persuade Congress in 1960 that American aid was necessary to prevent Soviet influence in Egypt.[161] Director Dulles clarified that the Kremlin bought Egyptian cotton that it did not need, which Moscow later resold to the West by indirect means, in order to sway Nasser away from the West.[162] These Congressional attacks stemmed from lobby groups that had economic or political interests in the Mideast.[163] To better understand American-Egyptian relations during the Johnson presidency and Nasser's strategy in the Middle East, a clarification of Nasser's domestic and regional policy is in order.

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[156] Congressman Seymour Halpern of New York, speaking on Nasser, April 1, 1963, to the Committee on Un-American Activities, USCR, 81st Cong., 1st sess., 1965, vol. 111 pt. 3 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), 5217; for Hitler analogy see Congressman Leonard Farbstein of New York Speaking on West Germany's relations with Israel, February 17, 1965 USCR, 1965, 2901.
[157] Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the US-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 137.
[158]"Middle East: Three Ways," *Time*, April 1, 1957.
[159]"LEBANON: Anti-U.S.manship," *Time*, Monday, May 19, 1958.
[160] *The New York Daily News*, May 21, 1957.
[161] House Committee on Un-American Activities United States, *Communist Economic Warfare*, Consultation with Dr. Robert Loring Allen, United States Congress, Committee on Un-American Activities:., USCR:. 86th Cong., 2nd sess., USCR, 1960 April 6, 1960, 7-8.
[162] Ibid.
[163] More on the influence of these groups in Chapter Four.

Nasser regarded Arab unity as the most important issue for the Arab world.[164] In defining pan-Arab nationalism, Nasser once admitted that it meant many things to him.[165] Nonetheless, he later refined this admission by explaining it means "a spiritual drive" to unite Arabs based on language, culture, and history.[166] In order to fulfill the dream of Arab unity, Nasser believed that "freedom from outside influence" and imperial domination from outside forces must be expunged, first, internally by targeting Communists, Islamists, and reactionaries.[167] Nasser saw these three forces threats to Arab unity. Therefore, Nasser believed that the Muslim Brotherhood—a grassroots organization that began in Egypt before Nasserism—was a fifth column influenced by the reactionary "conservative Arab order."[168] Moreover, Nasser believed that Egyptian Communists were controlled from Moscow.[169] Thus according to Nasser, in order to achieve Egyptian, and then Arab, unity, Egypt and subsequently the Arab world had to rid itself of political parties—there is only one party in Nasser's Middle East—the Arab Socialist Union (ASU).[170]

This view is enlightening because it shows that the most important issue for Nasser was Mideast politics, not Cold War politics. To Nasser, participation in the Cold War forced the

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[164] Gamal Abdul Nasser, "where I stand and why," *Life*, July 20, 1959, 96-110.
[165] For example, in *The Philosophy of a Revolution*, Nasser describes three circles—an African, Islamic, and Arab circle—which Egypt is the center of. For Nasser, the Arab circle is the most important, but does not define how to go about uniting that Arab world, see Gamal Abdul Nasser, *Philosophy of a Revolution* (Buffalo: Economica Books Smith, 1959), 54-55.
[166] Gamal Abdul Nasser, "where I stand and why," *Life*, July 20, 1959, 96-110.
[167] Ibid.
[168] W. Taylor Fain explains that the conservative Arab order was led by Saudi Arabia and Jordan and opposed to Nasser's revolutionary movement. Although Fain does not define this order, the conservative monarchies of the Arab world made it up and included Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller Persian Gulf states. See W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and the British Retreat* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 126.
[169] Muḥammad Ḥasanayn Haykal, *The Sphinx and the Commissar: the Rise and Fall of Soviet Influence in the Middle East* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 152.
[170] The ASU was Nasser's party based on the principles of Arab nationalism, pan-Arabism, and Arab socialism. And Nasser's third attempt to establish a political party. More on the ASU later in this chapter.

Arabs to become "agents of foreign powers."[171] Any political parties, defense pacts, or religious organizations not controlled by Cairo meant giving up independence. This explains why Nasser opposed the Baghdad Pact and other defense organization not controlled from Cairo. He believed that defense agreements with the great powers (Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States) seemed "too much like colonialism."[172] Consequently, what the United States viewed as a threat such as the Soviet Union and international Communism was not perceived by Nasser as an immediate danger. For Nasser, Mideast Communism (not international Communism), Islamist, and the conservative "reactionary" regimes posed the real danger. In the Cold War, Mideast states, Nasser explained, had to remain neutral and not take sides in the East-West conflict because they had their own Arab interests.[173]

The UAR: Spirit of *al-Ummah al-Arabiah* (the Arab Nation)

Although Nasser ultimately desired Arab unity from Morocco to the Persian Gulf, he engaged in regional politics to reinforce his position at home.[174] The more prestige Nasser won in the Arab world because of his struggle against imperialism, the more legitimacy he won on at the home front among Egyptians. To Egyptians, Nasser was known as "*Habib al-Malayeen*"

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[171] Gamal Abdul Nasser, "where I stand and why," *Life*, July 20, 1959, 96-110.
[172] "Nasser: the Other Man," *Time*, March 11, 1957.
[173] Ibid.
[174]R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971), 39-40. Ali Sabri, who held various titles during the Nasser years, including prime minister, states that Nasser's foreign policy was part of Nasser's plan to make Egypt appear as a central state in regional and international politics to get more from the superpowers. This interpretation is Sabri's. No other member of Nasser's inner circle acknowledges Sabri's definition of Nasser's foreign policy. Sabri also ignores the connection between crises in Egypt and crises generated by Nasser to win domestic legitimacy such as nationalized the Suez Canal Company at a time when political reforms were supposed to materialize. In addition, after the breakup of the UAR, the Kennedy administration continued relations with Nasser and to provide PL-480 aid after Kennedy's policy makers assessed that Nasser's influence had diminished and continue to diminish due to the breakup. See Abd Allāh Imām, *'Alī Ṣabrī yatadhakkar : bi-Ṣarāḥah 'An al-Sadāt (al-Qāhirah : Dār al-Khayyāl*, 1997). For the American assessment, see Memorandum of from the Department of State to the President, September 30, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1963,* Vol. 17:269.

(beloved of millions) and adored by Arabs throughout the Middle East.[175] His prestige surged due in the Middle East to his anti-imperialist and pan-Arabism stance. Nasser thus made his foreign policy decisions based on the amount of political capital he could win at home.

Nasser used a similar approach in his speeches. For instance, his two speeches commemorating the second anniversary of the revolution in the summer of 1954 disclosed his agenda concerning domestic and regional affairs and how he separated the two. On July 22, Nasser described to an Egyptian crowd at Republic Square the social and economic accomplishments of the revolution, but mentioned nothing on pan-Arab affairs.[176] Two days later on the Voice of the Arabs, which was broadcast to the Arab world, Nasser commemorated the revolution by stating: *"Rafana rayat huryat ala al-Istamar wa al-fasad wa al-taghan wa al-ragaan"* (we raised the banner of freedom against colonialism, corruption, tyranny, and reactionaries) and ended with *al-Arab Ummah Wahida"* (The Arabs are One Nation).[177] Nasser's strategy of seeking regional success to win political capital at home placed strains on Egypt's political system—especially during the Yemeni civil war between 1962 and 1967. Nasser's political and security dilemma, therefore, can be traced to his pan-Arab agenda in the Middle East. The beginning of Nasser's predicament begins with the union between Egypt and Syria from 1958 to 1961—the highpoint of Nasserism.[178]

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[175] "*Ya Gamal—Ya Habib El Malayeen*" (Gamal—the beloved of millions) was a popular song by one of Egypt's and the Arab world's most popular singer by Abdel Hakim Hafiz.
[176] *Al-Ahram*, July 23, 1954.
[177] For the speech on the Voice of the Arabs see Nasser's Voice of the Arabs Speech on the Anniversary of the Revolution, July 24, 1954, Nasser Speeches, *Min Ethat Sut al-arb binisbt al-eid al-thani llthwra* [the Voice of the Arabs], al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir [the Complete Speeches and Statements of President Gamal Abdul Nasser] vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah, [Gamal Abdul Nasser's intellectual Thoughts] (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥdah al-ʻArabīyah, 2007).
[178] Fawaz Gerges in his analysis of Nasser's problems contributes Egypt's military intervention in Yemen to the UAR's breakup. Nasser's security dilemma, however, as stated in this chapter was caused by a number of political and social issues in Egypt. For the Yemen issue see Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen: Co-opting Arab Nationalism," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1995) 292-311.

The zenith of Nasser's influence in the Middle East occurred in 1958 with the formation of the UAR. That year Syrian leaders approached Nasser to warn him that without Egyptian assistance, Syrian Communists would conquer the country and Syria would be lost to Communism.[179] Moreover, Syria's territorial integrity, they cautioned was directly threatened by Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, and Israel.[180] Despite the warnings of Syria's leaders and the fact that most Egyptians favored unity with Syria, Nasser was ill-disposed to the idea of an immediate union with Syria and instead wanted a five-year waiting period before unity.[181] It is unclear why Nasser wanted to wait five years before uniting with Syria. Perhaps, it was Syria's unstable political history or the political rivalry for Arab nationalism between Damascus and Cairo or even their different historical past. For instance, Mustafa Amin, Mohamed Heikal's counterpart and editor of *Akhabar el-Yawm*, saw the whole plan of union as quixotic because socially, he argued, Egypt and Syria did not have a common heritage.[182] Whatever the reason, Nasser anxiety towards union probably stemmed from Syria's turbulent political history than anything else.

Since it won independence after the Second World War, Syria suffered four military coups between 1949 and 1951. Although Nasser was averse to the idea of a united state between Syria and Egypt, he was trapped by his own pan-Arab ideology. 'Abd al-Laṭīf Baghdādī, a Free Officer and member of the RCC, suggests that Nasser feared that if he rejected the union with Syria, pan-Arab nationalists would turn elsewhere for leadership.[183] Similar to the hasty

[179] Heikal, *the Cairo Documents*, 123; also see 'Abd al-Laṭīf Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* [the Memoirs of 'Abd al-Laṭīf Baghdādī], vol. 2 (al-Qāhirah: al-Maktab al-Miṣrī al-Ḥadīth, 1977), 35-36.
[180] Syria's neighbors all disputed the internationally recognized borders of Syria and claim Syrian territory as their own.
[181] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī,* vol. 2, 35.
[182] Mustafa Amin, *Akhbar al-Yawm*, January 27, 1951. For more details on Mustafa Amin's role in UAR politics, see Elie Podeh, *The Decline of Arab Unity: the Rise and Fall of the United Arab Republic* (Sussex Academic Press, 1999).
[183] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī,* vol. 2, 151.

nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, he found himself reacting to events rather than taking the initiative.[184]

By 1958 the Syrian Communist party, which Nasser distrusted due to its close ties with the Kremlin, and the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, which was better organized and had a clear definition of pan-Arabism that could be traced as far back as 1940, challenged Nasserism for hegemony in the Middle East. Moreover, the Syrian Ba'athists not only questioned Nasser's claim for leadership of Arab nationalism, but also questioned Egypt's Arabism, often asking "how Arab were Egyptians."[185] By 1958, both the Communists and the Ba'athists had made headway in Syria.[186] Nasser needed to act quickly in order to regain the prestige he had won after the Suez Crisis among the Arab nationalist.

After the Suez Crisis, which catapulted Nasser's prestige to its zenith, the Ba'athists lost ground to Nasserism in the MENA. It took the Ba'athists several years to regain the momentum that was lost to Nasserism after Suez Crisis.[187] The resurgence of the Ba'athists in 1958 coincided with Syrian invitation for union. Accordingly, the Syrian offer for unity presented Nasser with an opportunity to expunge Syria of Ba'athism and Communism.[188]

Consequently, these political forces (Communism and Ba'athism) in the region presented Nasser with one alternative: expand or retreat. For Nasser, retreat was not an option. To fulfill his dream of pan-Arabism Nasser needed to expand. Baghdādī explains that once Nasser decided in favor of union, he intended to use the UAR as the first step toward the long sought after dream

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[184] Intelligence Memorandum: "The Arab World, the USSR, and the West," March 12, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[185] Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics*.
[186] The Ba'ath Party was cofounded by the two Syrian school teachers, Michel Alfaq, a Greek Orthodox Christian and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni Muslim. See Rami Ginat, *Syrian and the Doctrine of Arab Neutralism: From Independence to Dependence* (Portland, Or.: Sussex Academic Press, 2005).
[187] P. J. Vatikiotis*, Nasser and His Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 226.
[188] By 1959 Soviet leaders were worried about Nasser's anti-Communist campaign in Egypt that they attempted to convince him to cease his crusade against Middle East Communists by increasing Soviet aid to Egypt. See Current Intelligence Weekly Summary, April 30, 1959, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

of Arab unity.[189] In advancement of this dream, Nasser decided, following the formation of the UAR, to move against his political enemies in Syria. The Syrian Communist party was hit first and suffered the most, leading to a mass exodus of Syrian Communist intellectuals from the government.[190] For instance, Khalid Bagdash, the leader of the Syrian Communist Party, fled with his family to Moscow. Following Nasser's purge of Communist in Syria in 1958, a strain in relations was noticeable between Cairo and Moscow as Khrushchev and Nasser both publically exchanged insults.

What followed that fateful meeting in 1958 was the union between Egypt and Syria and an anti-Communist campaign in the UAR that confused Soviet leaders.[191] Khrushchev protested that Nasser could not claim to be a socialist while banning Communist parties in the UAR.[192] The Soviet premier once grumbled to Josip Broz "Tito", the leader of Yugoslavia, that Nasser confused him. He did not know what to make of a man who spoke of socialism and progressive reform, but he kept the banks and capitalists in place.[193] This relationship continued to deteriorate and worsened in 1959 when the Communist bloc began its anti-Nasser propaganda campaign and Khrushchev described Nasser as "hotheaded young man."[194] The Cairo press fired back with "the Truth behind the secret Communist Soviet Campaign [against Egypt]," in an attempt to explain the Communist backlash against Egypt.[195] Nasser continued his struggle against the Arab Communist throughout 1959, which also signaled the start of a rapprochement between the United States and Egypt.

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[189] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī,* vol. 2, 107.
[190] 'Abd Allāh Ḥannā*, al-Ahzab al-Seyaseya fi Soriya al-Karin al-'ushren* (Beirut: E-Kutub, 2011), 133.
[191] Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, 125.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Nikita Chruščëv and Sergei Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 3 (University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University, 2007), 811.
[194] Heikal, the Cairo Documents, 150-151. See also Gamal Abdul Nasser, "where I stand and why," *Life*, July 20, 1959, 96-110.
[195] *Al-Ahram*, June 6, 1961.

These economic and political reforms puzzled Khrushchev and frustrated Soviet leaders. Nasser's speeches perplexed Khrushchev much as they did Washington policymakers. The Soviet premier once complained to Tito that he did not know what to make of Nasser, who he thought was eccentric because he spoke of socialism and progressive reform, but imprisoned Communists and kept the banks and capitalist infrastructure open.[196]

But in Nasser's mind, there was no contradiction. He defined anti-Communism as part of 'positive naturalism," the desire of African and Asian states to stay out of the Cold War superpower conflict and focus on their own domestic affairs. Nasser's positive neutralism—also known as "Nasserism"—included notions of Arab unity, nonalignment, anti-imperialism, and, independence.[197] Khrushchev, however, failed to understand this belief, and Soviet-Egyptian relations continued to decline as a result. By September 1959, relations had deteriorated to the point that Nasser confessed to Raymond Arthur Hare, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Egypt, that it was "virtually impossible" for Egypt and other non-Communist states to come to terms with the Soviet Union because the Kremlin was too "dedicated to Communist principles."[198] Indeed, Soviet surreptitious actions in the Arab world continued to be the main point of contention between Cairo and Moscow in the late 1950s. [199] One point of dispute was Iraq and Abdul Kareem Kassem.

Abdul Kareem Kassem's Iraq

Kassem came to power in Iraq in a bloody military coup on July 14, 1958 that ended the Hashemite monarchy there. Kassem's Iraq presented a serious danger to Nasser. After seizing

[196] Nikita Chruščëv and Sergei Khrushchev, Memoirs *of Nikita Khrushchev*, vol. 3, 811.
[197] Heikal, *Cairo Documents*, 125.
[198] Telegram from the Embassy in the United Arab Republic to the Department of State, September 19, 1959, *FRUS 1958-1960*, Vol. 13:551.
[199] Current Intelligence Weekly Summary, April 23, 1959, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

power, Kassem mimicked the Free Officers' revolution by declaring Iraq was an Arab republic that would seek Arab unity through the United Iraq Republic by resisting imperialism.[200] Before the revolution in Iraq in 1958, Nasser had no real challengers to his progressive pan-Arab ideology.[201] The only threat to Nasserism came from the conservative "reactionary" regimes, which repulsed Arab nationalists because of their archaic monarchical systems and their close ties to the West. Kassem therefore presented an alternative to Nasser, leading to a rivalry among progressive Arab nationalists.[202]

Kassem's rejection of Nasser's role as leader of Arab nationalism presented Nasser with a predicament because Kassem not only challenged Nasser's claim for leadership of the Arab world, but he offered an alternative to Nasser in the West.[203] Kassem, although a secularist was a Shiite Muslim. Shiite philosophy combined with his brand of Arab nationalism threatened Nasser's Sunni Arab nationalism. Kassem furthermore threatened Nasser's positive neutralism with all the benefits that came with it, including aid from the Soviet Union and the United States, such as PL-480. Hence, to share leadership with Kassem or allow his brand of Arab nationalism to spread in the region posed a threat to Nasserism. Nasser needed a way out of his quandary, and the newly-created UAR played a vital part in his plans to attack his enemies—particularly Kassem. Syria therefore became Nasser's launching pad to spread the gospel of Nasserism in the Arab world and to punish its enemies.[204]

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[200] *Al-Ahram*, July 15, 1958.
[201] Due to the formation of the UAR and Nasser's Ba'athist purge, the Ba'athists were now leaderless.
[202] Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 18. Also see Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen: Co-Opting Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 292-311.
[203] McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967*, (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003) 129.
[204] The political crises of 1958 that saw the implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine—discussed in chapter one—all stemmed from the union between Syria and Egypt. Indeed, during this period Nasser was responsible for a number of attacks on his political enemies. For instance, Syrian fighter jets attempted to force King Hussein's plane

In December 1958, a Nasser-inspired coup shook Kassem's rule, but ultimately failed. Then in March 1959, Nasserite forces made another attempt to take control of the oil rich Iraqi province of Mosul. Kassem later discovered that the attacks originated from outpost on the Syrian-Iraqi border, and were led by one of Nasser's deputy intelligence officers, Kamal al-Din Rif'at.[205] As a result of the Mosul rebellion, Baghdad erupted with pro-Communist anti-Nasser protest in which Nasser was burned in effigy and chants of "Death to Nasser! Death to Nasser!" were heard in the streets.[206]

On March 23 1959, in a delivered speech from the "Northern Capital" (Damascus),[207] the conflict intensified when Nasser accused Kassem of working with Communists against Arab unity.[208] What worried Nasser most was that his intelligence services found links between the Syrian and Iraqi Communists, and it seemed that they were conspiring against the union.[209] Nonetheless, Nasser was unwilling to get directly involved in the Mosul rebellion. No UAR troops from Syria were sent to aid the Nasserite revolutionaries, and without Nasser's aid, the rebellion failed. The only thing exchanged between Nasser and Kassem were insults, not bullets. By July, Qassim accused Nasser of conspiring with Israel and France against Arab nationalism.[210] Following the exchange of insults between Nasser and Kassem, the Cairo and Baghdad press joined the fray. The Egyptian press criticized Kassem's regional politics as Soviet-controlled and condemned his brand Arab nationalism as a tool of Communism.[211]

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to land in Damascus or Jordanian exiles fomenting rebellion in Jordan. Moreover, it was from Syria that pro-Nasser protests began in Beirut and threatened the pro-Western government in Lebanon.

[205] Elie Podeh, *The Decline of Arab Unity*, 85.

[206] "Iraq: the Revolt that Failed," *Time*, March 23, 1959.

[207] The UAR had two capitals the Northern Capital, which was Damascus, and the Southern Capital, which was Cairo.

[208] *Al-Ahram*, March 23, 1959.

[209] Podeh, *The Decline of Arab Unity*, 86.

[210] Gamal Abdul Nasser, "where I stand and why," *Life*, July 20, 1959, 96-110.

[211] *Al-Ahram* March 23, 1959; also see *Al-Ahram* March 34, 1959; and *Al-Ahram* March 25, 1959.

Moreover, Nasser accused Kassem of attempting to turn the Middle East into a "Communist Crescent.[212]" Kassem fired back with his own retorts, and ranked Nasser above Israel as the enemy of Arab nationalism.[213] The Baghdad coup and the Mosul uprising demonstrated the extent Nasser was willing to go to defy Kassem and his brand of Arab nationalism.

Although Nasser was unable to bring Baghdad into his Nasserist camp, early in 1962 Nasserism seemed on the verge of victory, as the Nasser-Qassim rivalry came to an end. Indeed, the CIA predicted in June of that year that Nasser would remain "the foremost leader" in the Arab world and that Qassim was no real threat to Nasserism.[214] The intelligence report stated that Nasser's stature in the Arab world depended on the success of the UAR.[215] Because so much depended on the success of the UAR to Nasser's ideology and it was to be the litmus test for other future unity project, Nasser poured in all his energies to the triumph of the union.[216] Perhaps this is the reason Nasser was so reluctant to accept the union in the first place because so much depended on its success.

The End of "the Nasser Experiment"[217]

Discontent in Syria arose from the Abdul Hakim Amir's[218] iron-fisted social planning, which attempted to apply Nasser's social reforms to Syria.[219] What Amir ignored, or failed to realize, was the cultural difference between Syria and Egypt. Syrians were better educated and

[212] *Al-Ahram*, March 23, 1959.
[213] Nutting, *Nasser*, 245.
[214] Ibid.
[215]Ibid.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Mustfa Abid al-fatha*, Al-Ighat al-kwmi fi al-rohwaih* (Kuwait, al-Majlis al-watani llthakafa was al-finon wa al-adab), 255. Although Said Aburish contributes this phrase to Saddam Hussein, the phrase has been in use in the Arab world before the former Iraqi premier used it.
[218] CAB/129/107, TNA. Amir was one of the most powerful Free Officers after Nasser and the Egyptian prime minster of Syria.
[219] Nutting, *Nasser*, 262-263.

had a tradition of being merchants as opposed the dominate *fellahin* (agricultural) culture of Egypt.[220] Khalid Bakdash, the leader of Syria's Communist party, predicted in 1958 that the union would not last because Syrians were forced to adjust their higher living standards to that of the *fellahin*.[221]

Kassem attempted to take advantage of the discontent in Syria. As rumors of unity between Iraq, Syria, and Jordan spread and Kassem conspired with anti-Nasser dissidents in Syria, in February 1960, Nasser began to suspect that Kassem and Communist allies in the region were all working against Nasserism to establish a "Communist Fertile Crescent" in the Levant.[222] This regional security dilemma forced Nasser to allocate UAR resources and financing towards the effort to defeat Kassem and the Communists.

As Nasser began to earmark more and more resources for the effort to defeat Kassem, internal danger arose in the UAR, creating a political dilemma for Nasser. Nasser's social reforms that began in the mid-1950s in Egypt were beginning to fail in the early 1960s. These same reforms that barely worked in Egypt were applied to Syria. As a result, Nasser suffered politically in both Egypt and Syria. Additionally, Syria's traditional free market economy was shackled under the constraints of Nasserism, which emphasized socialistic reforms. As large segments of Syria's industry fell under state control, Syria's merchant class began to protest the Egyptian-imposed social reforms.[223] The UAR system began to unravel in 1961 when enemies of Nasserism in Syria found common ground for revolt.

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[220] Ibid.
[221] Tareq Yousef Isamael and Jacqueline S. Ismael, *The Communist Movement in Syria and Lebanon* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 51.
[222] Nasser used the same phrase as al-Ahram used in 1959. See Note 57 and Nasser, "where I stand and why," *Life*, July 20, 1959, 96-110. Also see *New York Herald Tribune*, February 10, 1960, p. 9.
[223] Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir*, 59.

At five in the morning on Thursday, September 28, Nasser received an emergency call at his Abbassia barracks home in Cairo. That morning, reports that anti-Nasser forces had seized control of Damascus and seceded from the union inundated Nasser desk.[224] Baghdādī, refers to the day they heard the news of the breakup as the *Yamm* al-*Sadam* (the day of shock) or the *infisal* (the breakup).[225] At first, Nasser was in denial. Later that day he told a crowd of Egyptians gathered at Republic Square that the "terrible and painful day" in history was a conspiracy by a fringe group of mutineers who wanted to establish "dictatorship of capitalism" in Syria and was not a popular uprising.[226] Nasser told the crowd that he will not compromise with the "traitors" and abandon the majority who were for unity because of the "avaricious" desires of the few.[227] The Cairo press, which wanted to prevent Arab nationalism for its own interest, went further and blamed the split on Western imperialism.[228] Nonetheless, the Syrian officers enjoyed widespread support within the army and business community.[229]

In the end, Nasser did nothing to save the union.[230] Although he mentioned using the army to march on Damascus and there were contingency plans to invade the UAR, which were aborted, he never resorted to the use of force.[231] The only attacks Nasser resorted to when it

[224] *Al-Ahram*, September 29, 1961; Nasser continued to live in the same house throughout his life that he lived in in the when he was a colonel in the army. Aburish states that Nasser did not feel "comfortable" in King Farouk's palace and continued to live in his barracks home; see Aburish, *Nasser*, 90.
[225] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol 2, 107.
[226] "Nasser's Speech at Republic Square on the Syrian Separation," *Al-Ahram*, September 29, 1961, p.1.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Memorandum for the Record, September 28, 1961, *FRUS 1961–1963*, Vol. 17:259. Anglo-American concerns after the breakup of the UAR hovered around Egypt's neighbors stirring up trouble and causing a wider war. Both Britain and the United States worried about Israel's next move in response to the crisis; see Memorandum for the Record, September 28, 1961, *FRUS 1961–1963*, Vol. 17:259 and CAB/129/107, TNA.
[230] Nasser did send paratroopers to Aleppo and Latakia, but this force was later ordered to retreat see A.I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 33.
[231] *Al-Ahram*, September 28, 1961.

came to the new regime in Damascus were verbal. This was the second time[232] that Nasser failed to use his resources to safeguard the dream of Arab unity.

This raises an interesting question: why was he unwilling to use force to challenge the secession movement in Syria and save the dream of pan-Arabism? It remains unclear, but perhaps he hoped Syrians would rise up against the military junta and ask the Egyptians to return. Nasser's response does make sense because the leaders of the coup were from the Alawite minority and seventy percent of Syrians were Sunni. Perhaps Nasser thought the Sunnis would rise up against the Alawites and reestablish the UAR. Sami Sharaf sheds light on another possible reason for Nasser's reluctance to use force. The union with Syria was especially stressful on Nasser because it intensified internal and regional troubles between Egypt and its neighbors. Internally, Egyptians paid higher taxes and bore financial burdens to make the union possible, and many people resented it.[233] Nasser was aware, for instance, that Syria had internal problems and struggled politically since it won independence after the Second World War and Egyptians had to bear the burden.[234] Sharaf states that the years 1952 and 1961 were the most stressful and challenging for Nasser due to domestic and regional problems.[235] During these years the UAR was bitterly resented by its neighbors who saw Nasserism as a direct challenge to their own political ideologies.[236] Externally, Nasser's enemies increased and the UAR was seen—rightfully so—as a vehicle to advance Nasserism. It was during these years, Sharaf

[232] The first was the Mosul uprising.
[233] "President Nasser's Prestige in Egypt Unshaken: Blow if Big Powers Recognize New Syrian Regime," *Times of London*, October 5, 1961, pg. 13.
[234] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol 2, 34-35.
[235] Sharaf, *'Abd al-Nāṣir Kaf Hakm Miṣr?,* [Abdul Nasser: How He Ruled Egypt] (Beirut: Dar al-Gil, 1997), 46.
[236] For example, Ankara, Turkey, Syria's neighbor to the north, saw something fundamentally wrong with Nasserism and its internal economic problems, which it stated had no real ideology. See *Gumhuriyat* (Turkey), October 3, 1961.

explains, that Nasser's health suffered and he developed a number of ailments, including diabetes.[237]

Aside from Nasser's illness and indecisiveness, an RCC emergency meeting held the day after the schism discloses yet another possible reason behind Nasser's decision not to use force. When the RCC met on September 29 to decide the UAR's fate, the ruling council vacillated. [238] A passionate debate between the RCC followed that threatened to tear the ruling body apart.[239] One group within the RCC thought it was too late to save the union, while another group wanted to intervene militarily.[240] Therefore, the breakup of the UAR threatened not only pan-Arabism, but the RCC itself—Nasser's seat of power.

Nasser finally broke the impasse and decided military intervention was too risky because the amount of manpower and resources needed to invade Syria were too immense. Instead, after carefully weighing his options, Nasser chose to dissolve the UAR instead of launch a military expedition to save it.[241] The loss of Syria was a blow to Nasser's prestige in the Arab world, but his decision not to use force in order to save the union was a setback for Nasserism and his dream of Arab unity.

Despite external and internal pressures on Nasser's decision not to use force to save the UAR—and the dream of Arab unity—this does not explain why Nasser so readily recognized the new regime in Syria. He repeatedly attacked the new regime as a "dictatorship of capitalism," but in October 1961—less than two weeks after the secession—he suddenly recognized the junta

[237] Sharaf, *'Abd al-Nāṣir Kaf Hakm Miṣr?,* 47.
[238] 'Abd al-Laṭīf Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol. 2, 119.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.

for no apparent reason. For instance, in a statement in 1961 to the "sons of the Arab nations," Nasser explained that only five nations had thus far recognized Syria:

> Currently, I sent a UAR mission to the United Nations to accept UN membership for Syria. It has been more than a week since the incident [coup] in Damascus and you could not see any [governments] moving towards recognition of Syria. Even now not one state recognizes Syria except five states and they are: the vestiges of the [Hashemite] dynasty of traitors to Arab history in Amman [King Hussein], and the government of Chiang Kai-shek, which was expelled from China to Formosa [Taiwan], and the government of military Fascist in Turkey, and the American Untied Fruit Company [controlled] government of Guatemala, and the Israeli friendly government of Tehran.[242]

These countries according to Nasser were led by the forces of colonialism against Arab nationalism.[243] Nasser then shocked the Arab world and announced that he, too, decided to recognize Syria.[244] He explained the reason for his decision was because he could not imagine seeing "Arab fighting Arab," thus he decided for rapprochement rather than Syrians and Egyptians fighting one another.[245] Nonetheless, the real reason for Nasser's *volte-face* was probably due to international trend of Syrian recognition.

The atmosphere in Cairo was grim and the flash in his smile seemed to disappear as the reality of the schism sunk in.[246] Nasser's gamble in the UAR was a "severe blow" to his prestige and it reversed his trend towards pan-Arabism.[247]As Nasser grew increasingly paranoid and began to see enemies all around him, he suffered physically.[248] His doctors diagnosed him with "black diabetes" and his arteries began to become blocked.[249] His doctors recommended that he

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[242] Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser Concerning the Separation of UAR, October 5, 1961, al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Jay Walz, "The Flash Is Gone From Nasser's Grin: The setback to his dream of a united Arab world has brought his career to a crisis," *New York Times*, Nov 19, 1961.
[247] "President Nasser's Prestige in Egypt Unshaken: Blow if Big Powers Recognize New Syrian Regime," *Times of London*, October 5, 1961, pg. 13.
[248] Nutting, *Nasser*, 294.
[249] Sharaf, *'Abd al-Nāṣir Kaf Hakm Miṣr?,* 46.

rest and reduce his work-load, but Nasser believed that Ba'athists and the conservative Arab regimes conspired against him, especially when it came to Arab unity. As a result of Nasser's paranoia, the police state apparatus grew in Egypt, targeting Nasser's political enemies as conspirators against Arab unity.[250] He also targeted the middle class by freezing their assets. Among the most infamous cases was that of Ahmed Abboud, Egypt's wealthiest self-made man.[251]

Nasser also began to shuffle his cabinet and dissolved the National Assembly. The police-state apparatus, set up to keep order, got stronger over the years and was increasingly used as an instrument of suppression.[252] In October, one month after the breakup of the union, Nasser moved against Wafd and the "reactionary capitalist."[253] By the end of the year, he moved against the pillars of capitalism—the banks, corporations, and insurance companies.[254] He used the General Intelligence Agency (GIA), which was modeled on the CIA, to suppress his opponents at home and censor the media.[255]

Kennedy's Response to the Breakup

The United States approached the breakup of the UAR with caution, but worried that Syria would disintegrate into a "dog-eat-dog political jungle" and that Communists would seize the opportunity to take advantage of the chaos.[256] Since the formation of the UAR, Syria was for once in its history politically stable and its border with Israel was relatively quiet. Foggy

[250] Nutting, *Nasser*, 296.
[251] Jay Walz, "EGYPT'S ELITE HIT BY ASSET SEIZURE: Sequestration Lists Read Like Social Register," *New York Times*, Nov. 12, 1961, p22.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Nutting, *Nasser*, 296.
[254] Ibid., 297.
[255] Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: The Amorality of Power Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 99-100.
[256] Memorandum of from the Department of State to the President, September 30, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1962*, Vol. 17:269.

Bottom[257] therefore determined that the breakup of the UAR was not in the "U.S. best interest" and that the White House should take any "opportunity for the preservation" of the UAR.[258] The loss of the union for Nasser thus spelled trouble for the United States and the postwar petroleum order mainly because a politically unstable Syria would seek to win domestic approval by stirring things up on Israel's border, which would threaten the stability of the region.

Kennedy's advisors also worried that Nasser's loss in Syria would prompt him to lash out and "turn defeat into victory" as he had done in the past.[259] Therefore, Kennedy's advisors wanted to prevent Nasser from overreacting, so they tried to assuage the Egyptian leader by informing him that they wished "to continue a business as usual policy" and would not abandon him.[260] Finally, Robert Komer, senior national security advisor to President Kennedy, suggested to his boss that the administration "be extra nice" to Nasser in order to take advantage of the Syro-Egyptian split so as to win political points with Cairo.[261]

In its pursuit to "be extra nice" to Nasser, the White House refrained from recognizing the new Syrian regime and cautioned Syria's neighbors from taking military action to take advantage of the breakup.[262] This warning was clearly meant for Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey—all had mobilized for action in anticipation of countermoves by Nasser. Indeed, King Hussein of Jordan had encouraged the people of Syrian since the beginning of the formation of the union to rise up against Nasser, and Syrian exiles were allowed to operate from Amman.[263] When it became evident that the coup in Damascus was a success, Hussein mobilized his forces to the

[257] Another name for the Department of State.
[258] Ibid, 271.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid, 270.
[261] Memorandum, September 30, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1962,* Vol. 17:273.
[262] Circular Telegram from the State Department to Certain Near Eastern Posts, October 3, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 17: 280.
[263] Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan 1955-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 118.

Syrian border to aid the conspirators against Nasser.[264] Although Nasser was at his nadir and this was an opportune moment to take advantage of Nasser, the Kennedy administration did not forsake Nasser to the wilderness of Mideast politics. Far from abandoning him, the White House actually increased American aid to him because of Cairo's vital role in the postwar petroleum order.[265]

Nasser's Political Dilemma

Rioters burned Cairo on January 25, 1952. The mob targeted Britons in Egypt and claimed that it was retaliation for British action at Ismailia.[266] But the arrest that night of Ahmed Hussein, the leader of the Egyptian Socialist Party, proved that there was something more profound than the British presence at Suez.[267] Although the January uprisings were suppressed, deeper social issues such as unemployment, political freedom, and societal reforms were more at work than Britain's imperial presence in the country.[268] In Egypt and throughout the Middle East, imperialism and Zionism were used as an excuse to protest in order to express deeper social problems. The January uprising tensions continued to boil until they climaxed with the July 1952 Free Officers' Revolution.[269]

Although the Free Officers' Revolution erupted because of the lack of civil rights and political liberty, the revolution ended "Egypt's liberal age" and the democratic process in Egypt

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[264] Ibid.
[265] See Chapter One for the type of aid Kennedy offered Nasser.
[266] Egyptian irregulars had been waging a guerrilla-style war against the British presence at Suez since 1951.
[267] "Dead May Total 20," *New York Times*, Jan 27, 1952, pg. 1.
[268] Maḥmūd Fawzī, *Abd al-Nāṣir* (al-Qāhirah : Markaz al-Rāyah lil-Nashr wa-al-I'lām, 1997), 20.
[269] The Free Officers were the group of army and air force officers in Egypt who overthrew King Farouk in a bloodless coup. According to the new literature on the subject, Nasser was not yet considered the leader of the group, but a rising star within it; see Alī al-Dīn Hilāl, *Tatawr il-Natham il-Seyasa fi Misr* [The Advancement of the Political Process in Egypt] (Cairo: Jāmi'at al-Qāhirah, Kullīyat al-Iqtiṣād wa-al-'Ulūm al-Siyāsīyah, Markaz al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Siyāsīyah, 1997), 165-166.

that began in 1919.[270] Domestically, Nasser and the Free Officers had more problems on their hands. The military junta led by Nasser had to find a way to make the revolution final, so they broadcast that they intended to carry out social reforms. Nasser and the Free Officers, however, had no plan for improvement, so they merely improvised.[271] They vaguely defined their revolution as a social one with the intention of ending one class' domination over the other.[272]

In 1953, Nasser and the Free Officers dissolved all the political parties and announced a three-year quiescent period to allow political and democratic reforms. In the meantime, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) comprised of inner circle members of the Free Officers, would rule the country during the transition period. Miles Copland, an American intelligence officer in Egypt, reveals the extremes that some RCC members were willing to go to achieve tranquility. Copland explains that some RCC members suggested public executions of "enemies of the revolution" in order to set an example to those contemplating counterrevolution.[273]

The Free Officers inherited the political and social difficulties of the old regime. During the pre-Suez Crisis period (1953-1956), Egypt's economic and political systems were to be solved in what became known as the "*al-Natham al-Jadeed*" (New Order).[274] From 1953 to 1954, the Free Officers attempted to satisfy Egyptians by defining the new order and retaining some political elements of the old system.[275] It was during this period that Nasser emerged as leader of the Free Officers and began to consolidate power by moving against the most powerful

[270] Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J Johnson, and Barak A Salmoni, eds., *Re-envisioning Egypt 1919-1952* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press), 277-278.
[271] Kerr, *Egypt Under Nasser*, 23-24.
[272] Nathan J. Brown, "Nasserism's Legal Legacy," in Elie Podeh; Onn Winckler eds., *Rethinking Nasserism*, 131.
[273] Copeland, *The Game of Nations*, 78-79.
[274] Alī al-Dīn Hilāl, *Tatawr il-Natham il-Seyasa fi Misr*, 165-166.
[275] Ibid.

opposition groups—the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communists—with members of the opposition groups being imprisoned or sent to labor camps throughout Egypt.[276]

On January 16, 1956—months before the Suez Crisis and to great festive fanfare—the Free Officers introduced the new Egyptian Constitution as part of this reconstruction period.[277] By defining the powers of the presidency and the National Assembly, the constitution of 1956 gave Egyptians what they wanted, political and social reforms. Egyptians later discovered that these improvements were limited and not meant as a complete transformation of the Egyptian society or its political system nor were they meant to transform Egypt into a classless society.[278]

Finally, with tightening government control over political parties, Nasser formed the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), which was the third attempt since 1952 to define Arab Socialism and control Egypt's political parties.[279] By 1964, Nasser's ASU began to establish "ideological institutes" in the periphery of Egypt in order "bring the revolution" to the countryside.[280] The aim of this indoctrination was to target the powerbase of the Muslim Brotherhood by emulating the Brotherhood's own grassroots tactics of using local officials rather than outsiders.[281]

The Economic System Under Nasser

The years 1952 to 1956 were the era of free enterprise in Egypt. With the exception of the rail system and irrigation, there was no government control over the economy.[282] During this

[276] The United States had recognized Nasser as the real leader of the revolution as early as 1953. See Chapter One.
[277] *Al-Ahram*, January 16, 1956. Egyptians had been waiting for a constitution since the revolution of 1952 when the Farouk era constitution was abolished and a commission was formed to form a new one, which was finally completed in January 1956.
[278] Brown, "Nasserism's Legal Legacy Accessibility, Accountability, and Authoritarianism," in *Rethinking Nasserism,* 133.
[279] Like most of Nasser's domestic political decision, this seems a reaction to the events in Egypt in 1962. For the best account of the ASU and Nasser's goals behind it, see Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir.*
[280] Embassy in Cairo, "New ASU Approach to Problem of Rural Indoctrination," RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, POL 13, UAR Box 2763, NARA.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.

period, Egyptians could expect a relatively stable economy. In its search of popular support and legitimacy, however, the RCC wanted to raise the living standards of the *fellahin* (the Egyptian peasant). These economic and social reforms had taken their toll on Egypt. In order to achieve an annual growth rate necessary for economic prosperity, the RCC decided on more state control of the economy and to borrow heavily from foreign investors.[283] They explained to Egyptians the basis of these reforms were the redistribution of wealth and civil rights.[284] In addition, the RCC also moved to increase public employment.

If Nasser and the Free Officers wanted to keep their hold on power—and all the perks that came with it—they needed to improve the economy. The solution—Nasser's Holy Grail—was the Aswan Dam project. Cotton accounted for 80 percent of Egypt's foreign exchange; thus the dam project could boost both cotton production and other cash crops as well.[285] In principal, the Aswan Dam would provide more fertile land for export and consumption. The United States and Britain—eager to sway Nasser from the Soviet sphere—promised to help fund the project; but after Nasser bought arms from the Soviet bloc and recognized Red China, the West retracted its offer. Nasser struggled to maintain power and needed an issue that would help him keep his position.[286]

Nasser found a solution to maintain power in Suez. In one decisive move, the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company—he thought—would solve his finical problems and get rid of the British occupation.[287] Nonetheless, if the plan failed it could end his rule, but it was

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[283] Intelligence Report, 1962, NARA/ CIA/ORIS.
[284] Joel Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement: Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 94.
[285] Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*, 203.
[286] Keith Kyle suggests this was the reason that Nasser sought to negotiate a deal with Britain in 1954 because Nasser did not want Naguib or his political enemies in Egypt to take advantage of the political situation. See Keith Kyle, *Suez*, 52; Sami Sharf, states that the decisions concerning the canal were made by the RCC and not by Nasser alone. See Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1, 220-221.
[287] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir,* vol. 1 :219.

a gamble he was willing to risk.[288] The gamble paid off, and Nasser emerged from the Suez Crisis a demigod among the Arab masses. The Suez Crisis, or what Egyptians call the Tripartite Aggression, was the source of Nasser's growing power and influence in Egypt and the Middle East. After that conflict, Nasser emerged as the uncontested leader of the reform movement, which combined Arab nationalism with socialism and was later called Nasserism.[289] In a series of moves between 1957 and 1961 meant to foster economic and social reforms and to consolidate power, Nasser expunged the Wafd[290] and what remained of the Communist and Muslim Brotherhood.[291]

By early 1960, as the new social and economic restructuring was attempted, Nasser's bureaucracy burgeoned to one million civil servants—not including the armed forces or the nationalized companies.[292] By the end of the year, the UAR was running out of hard currency and sold more than $30 million of its gold reserve.[293] The projections for the 1960-1965 Five Year Plan were 7 percent average annual growth, but in reality it was only 4 percent due to the collapse in the cotton crop, Egypt's high birthrate, and the Yemeni civil war, all of which burdened Egyptian society and the military.[294] In response, Nasser turned to the West and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for aid, but he had accumulated so much debt that by 1964 Egypt had reached its credit limit.[295]

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[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid., 166-167.
[290] The Wafd Party was one of the first nationalist parties to emerge during the First World War. Led by the ultranationalist Saad Zaghloul, the Wafd grew in popularity during the interwar period and continued to rise in popularity until the 1953 Free Officers' Revolution that banned it.
[291] M. Raid el-Ghonemy, "An Assessment of Egypt's Development Strategy, 1952-1970," in *Rethinking Nasserism,* 254.
[292] Copeland, *The Game of Nations*, 138
[293] "Egypt's Financial Problems," Intelligence Report, January 1965, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[294] "Egypt's Development Strategy, 1952-1970," in *Rethinking Nasserism*, 256. For the civil war in Yemen see Chapter Three.
[295] Ibid.

In the 1960s, the government was able to deliver on its promises—with the help of U.S. PL-480 aid—to provide enough food and housing needs to Egyptians as well as provide welfare to the poor. By the mid-1960s, construction of the Aswan Dam and rapid industrialization projects provided enough work for growing workforce.[296] Nonetheless, the government could not do it all and continued to create thousands of public sector jobs. As a result of increased government involvement, an increase in government spending resulted leading to a burgeoning bureaucracy that inefficiently ran the government; this in turn led to "gross overemployment."[297] These economic and employment problems continued to plague Nasser well into the 1960s. Zakria Mohedeen, a member of the RCC and prime minster of Egypt in 1962, stated the burden of the bureaucracy cost the government $500 million annually.[298] Nasser was trapped in an "economic dilemma" due to the rapid industrialization and "overcommitment," which overburdened Egypt's foreign exchange and led to more economic difficulties. Despite the economic downturn, Nasser was unwilling to slow down the rapid economic progress and he hoped Egyptians—out of patriotism—would "tighten their belts."[299] Egyptians were, however, not ready to "tighten their belts," and discontent against Nasser's austerity measures appeared in early September 1965—especially in the Suez Canal Zone.[300]

Nasser's House Divided

One of the challenges that Nasser had to overcome as leader of Egypt was the division among the Free Officers. Although the foundations of the Free Officers is beyond the scope of this research, a brief look at the Free Officers before the 1952 revolution is needed to provide

[296] Ibid., 257.
[297] Egypt's Financial Problems, January 1965, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[298] Hendrick Smith, "War on the red tape Pressed by Cairo," *NY Times*, November 14, 1965.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Discontent Rising in Canal Zone, September 1, 1965, RG 159, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966 POL 2, UAR Box 2763, NARA.

historical context to this political dilemma. After the 1952 revolution, the Free Officers gave the surface appearance of political unity; but in reality they were divided into various groups. Miles Copeland states that shortly after the revolution, the Free Officers were split between "Zakaria men" or "Boghdadi Men," meaning that loyalty was not limited to Nasser alone.[301] Furthermore, the RCC, was split into its own groups based on those who were pro-American and the pro-Soviet.[302]

The rivalry within the RCC plagued it and—especially during crises—often shook it to its foundations.[303] These divisions within the movement were most profound during the pre-Suez Crisis era, but they chronically reappeared throughout the 1960s. This intermural rivalry between those who leaned towards the Eastern bloc and those who leaned towards the West began shortly after the revolution. The reasons for this disunion lay in foundations of the Free Officers. The Free Officer had little if anything in common. Politically, they were fractured between two extremes: those who adhered to Communism and those who followed the fanatical ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood.[304] Nothing united them except their hatred of Britain.[305]

For instance, Field Marshall Abdul Hakim Amir and Vice President Anwar Sadat who before the revolution were members of the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to orientate Egypt towards the West. While Ali Sabri, who headed the GIA—a known leftist—led the group that sought Soviet orientation.[306] Indeed, Miles Copeland refers to Sabri as the "leading anti-American figure" in the Egyptian government.[307]

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[301] Copeland, *The Game of Nations*, 82.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*, 138-139.
[304] Afaf L. Al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 107-108.
[305] Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir*, 20-21.
[306] "Egypt Tries Economic Reform" Intelligence Report, February 18, 1966, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[307] Copeland, *The Game of Nations,* 74.

Another challenge to Nasser's rule was the Egyptian army. When Nasser promoted Amir from colonel to major-general, he did so because he thought he could trust him, not because he was qualified.[308] The decision proved unpopular among the RCC and other Free Officers. Amir used his position to gain more power within the movement and promoted those most loyal to him, such as Shams Badran, a corrupt Free Officer who used his political power to give friends and loyalist high positions in the army and government.[309] Badran, likewise, began to conspire with Salah Nasir, another Free Officer, to furtively gain more power in the 1960s.[310] Amir and his cronies quickly became potential threats to Nasser.[311]

According to Baghdādī, Nasser noticed these changes in Amir's character shortly after the Suez War in 1956.[312] Amir became more aloof and his visits to Nasser's home became less frequent.[313] For his part, Nasser suspected that Amir and Badran were working together, but he did not know the extent of the relationship.[314] The relationship between Badran's and Nasir's inner circle in the intelligence services continued to develop after 1961.[315] After the Syrian separation in September 1961, more cracks appeared in the RCC, and distrust between Amir and Nasser escalated thereafter.[316]

Others in the Free Officers' inner circle noticed the rivalry between Amir and Nasser had developed shortly after the Suez Crisis in 1956. For instance, Ahmed Tu'aima, who was an original member of the Free Officers' movement and Minister of Labor and Religious Affairs

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[308] Vatikiotis, 138.
[309] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol 2, 123.
[310] Maḥmūd Jayyār and Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baybar, *al-Asrār al-shakhṣīyah li-Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir* [the Personnel Secrets of Gamal Abdul Nasser] (al-Qāhirah : Maktabat Madbūlī, 1976), 43.
[311] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol 2, 123.
[312] Ibid., 120.
[313] Ibid., 120-121.
[314] Ibid., 119.
[315] Maḥmūd Jayyār and Ḍiyā,' al-Dīn Baybar, *al-Asrār al-shakhṣīyah li-Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, 44.
[316] Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*, 164.

(and after 1963 Ambassador to Argentina), explains that Nasser blamed Amir for the military loss at Suez because Amir led the Egyptian forces in 1956, after the dissolution of the UAR, Nasser blamed Amir for the cruel methods he used against Syrian to implement social reforms.[317] Sami Sharf, who was involved in most of the meeting between Nasser and Amir stated that since the early days of the revolution, Amir attempted to increase his authority in the regime by whatever means were at his disposal.[318] Sharf confirms that the gradual hostility between Nasser and Amir began after the Suez conflict in 1956.[319]

Conclusion

Although Nasser was inundated with external and internal problems before 1956, he was able to overcome his political dilemma by using the Suez Crisis 1956 to his advantage. As the smoke cleared in the aftermath of the Suez War, Britain and France emerged from the fog with their influence and prestige gone while Nasser's had surged. In September 1958, when the UAR was formed, it seemed to the West that Nasserism was the trending ideology of the region. Syria, however, turned out to be a morass for Nasserism that drained Egypt's resources. Syria nearly ended Nasserism. The military junta in Damascus was able to reverse—in one decisive move—the political gains that Nasser had won after Suez. Isolated and besieged, Nasser desperately searched for crisis to rescue him from his political and security dilemma and hoped to regain his prestige. In 1962, a few days before the one-year anniversary of the breakup of the UAR, a crisis presented itself in Yemen.[320] Nasser hoped to discover in Yemen the same fate he received after Suez 1956—prestige and recognition as leader of Arab nationalism.

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[317] Ahmed Tu'aima, *Shāhid ḥaqq : ṣirā' al-sulṭah : Najīb, 'Abd al-Nāṣir, 'Āmir, al-Sādā* (Cairo: A. Ṭu'aymah, 1999), 120.
[318] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1:407.
[319] Ibid., 421.
[320] Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen: Co-opting Arab Nationalism, *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1995), 292-311.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SYRIAN DILEMMA & NASSER'S YEMENI LABYRINTH, 1962-1963

On Behalf of the wall of Yemen that was raised forever,
On Behalf of the Letters that were written by the countless brave young men in the land of Yemen,
On Behalf of Elms and the Wealth and the Sweat and the Tears and the Blood of Egyptians,
On Behalf of the Life that began in Yemen,
On Behalf of the Thousands who were buried in the mountains . . .
-Wajīh Abū Dhikrī[321]

"I am very worried about the war in the Yemen. Please tell me what is happening in the Yemen today."
-Caroline Kennedy[322]

For Nasser, 1961 would be a difficult year. The rivalry among the Arab states persisted and challenges to Nasser's leadership of Arab nationalism continued. It was a year when his triumph in the Suez Crisis that elevated him to the status of a latter-day Salah al-Din had evaporated and Nasserism's future in the Middle East was in doubt. For many Egyptian, and for Nasser himself, his fate as leader of Arab nationalism and Egypt seemed uncertain.[323] By November 1961, Nasser began to grow paranoid, as Syria and Iraq developed closer relations and it appeared that their eventual unity was foregone conclusion. As Nasser began to see conspiracies all around him, he imagined that an *al-natham al-infsal* (the Order of Separation), led by Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the colonial powers (Britain and France), resulted in a plot

[321] Wajīh Abū Dhikrī was the war correspondent of the Egyptian weekly paper *Ākhir Sā'ah*. Abū Dhikrī. He witnessed the war with Egyptian soldiers from the beginning the beginning to June War in 1967. See *al-Zuhūr tudfan fī al-yaman* [The Flowers Are Buried in Yemen] (Cairo: Dār al-Waṭan al-'Arabī, 1977).
[322] Five-year old Caroline Kennedy to Secretary of State Dean Rusk quoted in Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 98.
[323] Awnī 'Abd al-Muḥsin Farsakh, "al-nqd ghayr al-ṭārīkh ltjrbh al-wḥdh" [A Non-Historical Critical Examination of the Attempt at Unity] *Ṣawt al-'Arab Sawt: al-Naren mn al-Khlj el*ā al-mūḥt [Journal of Voice of the Arabs: Voice of the Nasserites from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic], vol. 3, (May 2010): 8; Rami Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution: Lutfi al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in 1960s* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 15.

against him.[324] According to Heikal, Nasser feared that this hostile force was attempting to extinguish the progress of Nasserism.[325]

To add to Nasser's suspicions—and yet another conspiracy masterminded by the omnipotent Order of Separation—were events in Lebanon in late 1961 in which a group of rightist "reactionaries" threatened the pro-Nasserite government in Beirut. Although unsuccessful, the revolution exposed the decline of Nasser's influence. In the heyday of Nasserism—from 1956 to 1958—Nasser drove events in the region. But after the UAR's breakup—as Lebanon proved—Nasser instead reacted to events. As Nasser's domestic enemies increased and his regional prestige plummeted, he searched for ways out of his political dilemma. In order to maintain political legitimacy in Egypt and reclaim his role as the leader of pan-Arabism, he needed an opportunity like the one afforded by the Suez Crisis. In his frantic search for a cause, Nasser found his calling by supporting regional and international revolutionary movements. He sought to aid these movements not for ideological reasons, but to combat the reactionary regimes and the Ba'athists in the Middle East and buttress his domestic power.[326] This initiative known as *al-ṭl'ht al-'rabīht* (the Arab Vanguard) was directly tied to Nasser's domestic and regional troubles.[327]

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[324] Heikal, *Li-Miṣr--lā li-'Abd al-Nāṣir : al-ḥamlah ḍidda Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir mā warā'hā?wa man warā'hā?* [For Egypt and Not for Abdel al-Nasser: Who and What is behind the Campaign Against Abdel Nasser?], (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-shrk, 2003), 54. Nasser actually refers to this movement as the "agents of colonialism" in a speech October 2, 1961. See Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at the National Conference in Cairo University, October 2, 1961, al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir Vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.

[325] Heikal, *Li-Miṣr--lā li-'Abd al-Nāṣir,* 54.

[326] Sami Sharaf states that Nasser went into Yemen because the regime had always supported revolutionary movements in the Arab word—which is true—for instance Iraq and Syria have been cited in this research and Egyptian meddling in Yemen date as far back as the mid-1950s are a few examples, but Sharaf dismiss Nasser's domestic concerns. See Sami Sharaf, Sami Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, 2:597. See also the commentary by Dr.ʿāṣm dsūq ī, "al-ghl bltiẓīm al-ṭlīʿī al-nasirī," *Ṣawt al-'Arab Sawt: al-Naren mn al-Khlj elā al-mūḥt,* vol. 3 (May 2010).

[327] Dr.ʿ āṣm dsūq ī , "al-ghl bltiẓīm al-ṭlīʿī al-nasirī," *Ṣawt al-'Arab Sawt: al-Naren mn al-Khlj elā al-mūḥt,*vol. 3 (May 2010), 3.

This chapter examines the reasons behind Nasser's decision to intervene in Yemen. I argue that although Nasser saw an opportunity to regain his prestige among the Arab nationalist and cure his political dilemma there, Nasser was reluctant to get involved in Yemen's civil war. Looking for someone to push him into Southwestern Arabia, Nasser found it in Anwar al-Sadat. Yemen, however, proved to be morass and instead of solution to Nasser's political dilemma, the conflict inflamed his security dilemma.

Choosing between Yemen and Algeria

By 1961, Nasser struggled to redefine the Free Officers' Revolution. Many of the promises of social and political reforms did not materialize. In July 1961 on the ninth anniversary of the revolution, Nasser attempted—yet again—to restructure Egypt's economy by attempting to introduce new reforms that would benefit all the social classes in the country. In January 1962, Nasser assigned a committee to pave the way for a new National Congress, which would attempt to continue the revolution's development towards socialism by nationalizing what remained of the private sector.[328]

Complicating Nasser's labors to improve his colossal domestic problems and his regional image was Egypt's birthrate, which was one more burden on Nasser's socioeconomic policy. The rapid surge in Egypt's population had posed a problem even before the Free Officers' revolution. As early as 1953, the minister of social services conducted a study on the burdens of population growth on the economy.[329] For Egypt—a deeply religious society—family planning was anathema.[330] In 1959, as a result Egyptians resisting family planning, Nasser, it

[328] Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution*, 19-20.
the 1960s (London: Frank Cass, 1997),
[329] Warren C. Robinson, Fatma H. el-Zantay, *The Demographic Revolution in Modern Egypt* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 41.
[330] Ibid.

seemed, had given up on the idea and instead begun to concentrate on the development of Egypt's agricultural sector He attempted to calm the religious authorities, who accused the regime of un-Islamic birth control practices, by redefining the meaning of the Egyptian family.[331] Since the early days of the revolution, what concerned Nasser most was the migration of conservative fellahin to cities. This exodus of rural workers placed stress on cities and the entire the political system.[332] In October, Nasser emphasized the importance of the village to society when he stated that the village was part of the family unit and fundamental to Egypt.[333] Nasser knew, however, that population growth and migration would continue, thus he returned to an old theme: the development of Egyptian land to sustain the growing population through the New Valley Project through the Aswan Dam.[334] Population growth was yet one more dimension to Nasser's political dilemma.

Meanwhile in 1962—as described in chapter one—this coalition of separation grew, with Jordan, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen joining its ranks.[335] By the summer, Egypt's isolation in the Arab world was nearly complete.[336] The growing conservative alliance against Nasserism consumed him and he became more radical in his struggle against the Order of Separation.[337]

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[331] Gad G. Gilbar and Onn Winckler, "Nasser's Family Planning Policy," in *Rethinking Nasserism*, 285.
[332] Āmāl Subkī *al-Tiart al-syasya fi masr min sinat 1919 wa hta sinat 1952* [The Political Currents in Egypt from 1919 to 1952] (Cairo: Dar al-marf, 1982), 62.
[333] Harry Ellis and Wilton Wynn "An Interview with Gamal Abdul Nasser," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 9, 1959.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Nasser refers to these the conservative alliance in the Middle East as the "agents of colonialism." See Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at the National Conference in Cairo University, October 2, 1961, *al-Majmū'ah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah* and Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser Concerning the Separation of UAR, October 5, 1961, *al-Majmū'ah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.*
[336] A.I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons), 37.
[337] Anwar Sadat was the first to present this argument in his diary. See Anwar Sadat, *The Public Diary of President Sadat: The Road to War* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), vol. 1: 403. See also Stephen Waltz, *The Origins of Alliances*, 80; Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir*, 59-60; *Vatikiotis, Nasser and His Generation*, 211; Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution,* 57; Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World*, 35-37; Leonard Binder, "Iconology, Ideology, and Demonology," in *Rethinking Nasserism*, 47.

Nasser approached the conservative challenge by internationalizing Nasserism. In the Mideast he seized the political offensive by supporting any pan-Arab revolutionary movement that arose. Domestically, he pushed through legislation such as the National Charter—which made Arab socialism the official policy of the state—to radically transform Egyptian capitalism.[338] Internationally, Nasser pledged his support—and provided material aid—to revolutionary movements that opposed colonialism—the agents of the Order of Separation.[339]

Less than one year after the Syrian crisis, another event developed in the Arabian Peninsula that presented Nasser an opportunity to put his political offensive strategy into practice against the conservative order. In Yemen, Imam[340] Ahmad bin Yayha Ḥamīdaddin suffered a spate of uprisings and assassination attempts from 1955 to 1962. Due to discontent among the populous, Yemen underwent a series of revolts after the Second World War. Yayha and his Zaydi Shiite sect of Islam made up 40 percent of the population, while the marginalized Sunnis were 60 percent. To outside observers in 1961, Imam Yahya was seen as the stabilizing force in the Yemen and without his ironfisted rule the country would have fallen apart. [341]

For instance, in 1955 Yahya crushed a military coup supported by members of the royal family. Despite Yemen's tribal society and its religious, economic, and social problems, Yahya always walked it back from the brink of civil war. However, Yahiya's tactics were ruthless. He mercilessly suppressed any kind of political opposition in his kingdom and refused constitutional reforms. The result was a police state that oppressed the disenfranchised Sunnis. In 1962, despite his iron-rule strategy to destroy the Sunnis—and perhaps because of it—there were several attempts on the Imam's life by military officers. In the March 1962 revolt, the Imam received

[338] Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution*, 11–34.
[339] Nasser supported revolutionary movement in the Congo and Vietnam as part of this approach.
[340] Imam in Shiite Islam refers to a religious and political leader of a community.
[341] *Al-Hayāt* (Arabic), January 22, 1961.

life-threating injuries. In August 1962, yet another unsuccessful revolt against the Imam occurred. For Nasser, the violence in Yemen presented him with an opportunity to recover his prestige, but before he could turn towards Yemen, Nasser needed to deal with Algeria, which in 1962 was on the verge to winning independence from France.

In August 1962, however, Nasser was more concerned with Algeria's eight-year struggle for independence from France than the civil war in Yemen.[342] Since 1954, when Algeria's revolution began, Nasser aided its struggle against France as part of his agenda to strengthen ties among Arab nationalists in MENA, and as part of his strategy to roll back the frontiers of the colonialism. With Nasser's help, and Algerian determination, the revolt overwhelmed the Fourth Republic until it collapsed in 1958, and then in 1962 it threatened to consume the Fifth Republic. After the 1962 Evian Accords ended the Algerian War, the country spiraled into a socioeconomic maelstrom and—it appeared—on the threshold of civil war. Nasser attempted to take advantage of the disorder by assisting the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) in its struggle to establish Algerian socialism—which was loosely based on Nasserism.[343] With the Algerian revolt winding down, Nasser turned his attention to Yemen, which was become more and more volatile by the minute.[344]

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[342] Muhammad Hsananyn Haykal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān* [Years of Boiling] (Cairo: Markaz al-Ahrām lil-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, Mu'assasat al-Ahrām, 1988), 619.
[343] President Gamal Abdul Nasser's interview with the *La Revolución* (Cuban), January 19, 1962, Gamal Abdul Nasser Public Papers Birzeit University [hereafter NPBU].
[344] 'Abd al-Mun'im Khalīl, *Ḥurūb Miṣr al-mu'āṣirah fī awrāq qā'id maydānī: 1939-45, 1948-49, 1956, 1962-67, 1967, 1968-70, 1973* [Egypt's Modern Wars in the Papers of a Field Commander, 1939-45, 1948-49, 1956, 1962-67, 1967, 1968-70, 1973], (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Mustaqbal al- 'Arabī, 1990), 55.

American-Egyptian Relations on the Eve of the Yemeni Civil War

From the perspective of the White House and, due to events similar to those that took place before the crises in 1956 and 1958, the Middle East was at a crossroads in January 1962.[345] The Kennedy administration's overriding concern was for Nasser's "severe economic plight" at home and the precipitous decline of his prestige abroad—especially after the Syrian secession.[346] If Kennedy was to ignore Nasser's economic stagnation and his declining influence, the Egyptian leader could shun the United States and embrace the Eastern bloc.[347] The administration knew that Nasser was an important ally and served American interests not only in the Middle East and among Arab nationalists, but among the nonaligned states as well.[348] To permit Egypt to turn to the Soviets in 1962 would result in a loss of influence in that part of the world—especially among the nonaligned states. The White House also realized that Nasser could also lash out against America's allies in the region in ways that could make the region unstable.[349] Attempting to take advantage of Nasser's "impressionable" state of mind that was due to the Syrian secession before the Soviets did, White House officials attempted to use American economic aid to curve Nasser's regional politics.[350]

Nasser's moves towards radical socialism troubled Kennedy. The White House predicted that these radical social measures would produce instability, which could undermine the entire postwar petroleum order.[351] The Kennedy administration even considered inviting Nasser to

[345] Memorandum for the President, January 10, 1962, NSF, Box 445, UAR, White House Memoranda 1961-1962, JFKL.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.
[348] Memorandum for the President, January 23, 1962, NSF, Box 445, UAR, White House Memoranda 1961-1962, JFKL.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Memorandum for the President, January 31, 1962, NSF, Box 445, UAR, White House Memoranda 1961-1962, JFKL.

Washington to encourage him "to moderate his more radical domestic policies" that were aimed at "social justice."[352] These domestic and regional events, however, caused the United States to radically change its approach towards Nasser. Ambassador John Badeau explained that Nasser "didn't understand American capitalism" because he thought of it in terms of "Levantine capitalists." Instead, Badeau wanted Nasser to visit the United States to understand America's "mix of public and private enterprise," which the ambassador hoped would help improve American-Egyptian relations.[353] The Yemen revolution and subsequent civil war, however, put an end to this strategy.[354]

The Yemeni Crisis

Yehya "the tyrant" died on September 18, 1962.[355] It was left to his son, Crown Prince Imam Muhammad Badr, to try to keep Yemen unified. In the days that followed the Imam's death, the Free Officers of Yemen, led by Brigadier Abdullah al-Sallal, deposed Imam Badr and declared the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). Nebulous news reports filtered out to the public that Badr died during the royal palace raid.[356] It was during this period that Nasser found himself contemplating the call for help from the Free Officers in Yemen.[357] Nasser was reluctant to get involved in Yemen and Yemen's Free Officers put Nasser in a difficult position. Nasser claimed to support revolutionary movements in the Arab world, but his entanglement in Syria in 1958 led to his downfall as leader of Arab nationalism in 1961. Syria, Therefore, weighed on Nasser's mind

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[352] Ibid.
[353] John S. Badeau, February 25, 1969, JFKLOH.
[354] Ibid.
[355] By the time he passed away—probably from injuries he suffered in an assassination attempt—Yahya's ironfisted rule caused even his co-religious Zaydis to condemn him as a tyrant. See Muḥammad Muḥammad Jawādī, *Mudhakkirāt qādat al-'askarīyah al-Miṣrīyah 1973: al-naṣr al-waḥīd* (al-Qāhirah : Maṭbū'āt Dār al-Khayyāl, 2000), 45.
[356] For example, see the Times of London, "IMAM OF YEMEN KILLED IN PALACE SHELLING," September 28, 1962, pg. 12.
[357] Jawādī, *Mudhakkirāt qādat al-'askarīyah al-Miṣrīyah*, 1967-1972, 45-50.

when he faced the decision to support the self-proclaimed Free Officers of Yemen—a movement that resembled Nasser's own. Nasser, however, had declared his *al-ṭl'ht al-'rabīht* avant-garde initiative to help revolutionary movements in the Arab world. In addition, the Yemeni Free Officer's revolution occurred a year after the Syrian schism and to ignore the plea for help from Sallal—Nasser's Free Officer *doppelgänger*—could prove catastrophic to Nasserism.

The historic connection between Egypt and Yemen weighed heavily on Nasser's decision. This historic connection went as far back as the Pharaonic times. Moreover, during the Ottoman era of Egypt (1517–1867), Egyptian troops were used, especially in 1545, to control Yemen. In 1567—four hundred years before the Yemeni civil war—Egyptian troops encountered a guerrilla insurgency that led them deeper into Yemen's mountainous terrain. Sixty-nine years after the Yemeni invasion of 1545, Ottoman Egypt withdrew in disgrace.[358] They did not return to Yemen until the reign of Mohammad Ali, who in the nineteenth century made Yemen the cornerstone of his Red Sea empire.[359] In 1869, the completion of the Suez Canal enhanced Yemen's importance to Egypt because control of the Red Sea—as Mohammad Ali knew—depended on control of the Yemen.

Following the Second World War and the end of the colonial period in Yemen, the country established close ties with Egypt and even formed a voting bloc in the Arab League with Cairo.[360] In 1958, Yemen furthered its ties with Egypt and joined the UAR, which became known as the United Arab States (UAS). The union between Nasser and Imam Ahmad Yaḥya, however, was one-sided. Nasser sent military and financial aid to Yahya, but received nothing in

[358] Andrew James McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt from the Ottoman Conquest to the Ramadan War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 31.
[359] For the strategic importance of Yemen during the Mamluk period see McGregor, *A Military History of Modern Egypt*, 22. For Yemen's role in Egyptian history during the reign of Mohammad Ali see Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 38.
[360] John S. Badeau, *The American Approach to the Arab World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 126.

return. Unlike his union with Syria, which brought economic, political, and military ties between Syria and Egypt, Nasser gained nothing from the union with Yemen. Yahya remained as head of Yemen and he maintained the same conservative economic and political system. In addition, under Yahya, Yemen remained a religious monarchy and not a Nasserite republic. Nasser, therefore, gained nothing from unity, and at times during Arab summits or Arab League meetings, Yahya would oppose Nasser on political issues concerning the reactionary regimes. When the tide turned against Nasser in 1961, due to the Syrian secession, Yahya annulled the marriage between Egypt and Yemen.[361]

Nasser saw revolutionary movements in the Arab world as a way out of his political dilemma. When the civil war in Yemen erupted, it presented Nasser a chance to regain his prestige as the leader of pan-Arab nationalism and to redeem himself from the UAS debacle. Two days after the outbreak of the Yemeni Free Officers' Revolution on September 26, Nasser sent "advisers" to help direct the revolution and assist it in overcoming the Royalist forces led by the resurrected Imam Badr. The move was part of Nasser's struggle to contain the reactionary regimes in the Arab world.[362] Nasser's intervention in Yemen was part of this ideological crusade to spread Nasserism as well as a strategic move to gain support for his social policies in Egypt.

Sadat's War: The Road to Intervention

When the Yemen civil war broke out, Nasser had just announced his *al-ṭl'ht al-'rabīht* initiative. The clash between the Royalists and the Republicans in Yemen presented Nasser with a solution to rollback his political predicament in Egypt and the Middle East. The move,

[361] I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons), 36.
[362] Intelligence Note: Pro-Nasser Army Coup Plot in Yemen, September 13, 1962 JFK Library National Security Files, Country File, Yemen 8/61-9/62.

however, does not explain the reason Nasser chose to risk another potential disaster—like the breakup of the UAR—in Yemen. Additionally, since Yemen shared a common border with the British protectorates of Aden and Saudi Arabia, Nasser knew that intervention there would endanger relations with the West.

The Republican leaders' trip to Cairo and their subsequent meeting with Vice President Anwar Sadat[363] helps explain Nasser's decision to send "advisers" to Yemen. When the YAR Free Officers arrived in Cairo, Nasser asked Sadat to meet with the YAR representatives and to report on the situation there. Sadat immediately set up a meeting with the YAR Republicans to assess the situation. He produced an account of his findings and conveyed it to Nasser. Sadat's account suggested that Egyptian aid and support to the Republican regime was prudent, and the risks were minimal to Egypt because the civil war—Sadat predicted—would be over as a result of Egyptian intervention.[364]

Sadat played a key role in Nasser's decision to go to Yemen.[365] Nasser would later blame Sadat for intervention. In 1965, when Nasser met Faysal al-Saud—who become king in November 1964—in Jeddah to end the conflict, Nasser pointed to Sadat and remarked, "he brought us into this [and now] we want an end to the affair."[366] Ahmed Tu'aima, however, indicates that it was both Nasser and Sadat who made the decision to go. He explains that Nasser and Sadat both saw Yemen as a simple solution to the Syrian predicament.[367] Finally, in a RCC

[363] Sadat held many post from 1952 to 1970. When Nasser died of a heart attack in 1970, Sadat became president.
[364] Heikal, *The Cairo Documents*, 214. See also Nutting, *Nasser*, 338; see also Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Anwar Sadat (London: Andre Deutsch, 1983), 32.
[365] Anwar Sadat, *In Search of identity: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 162.
[366] Quoted in Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*, 173. Ambassador Badeau knew from Egyptian sources that Sadat played a key role in the decision to go to war; see also Telegram from the Embassy in the UAR to State, October 1, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:150.
[367] Ahmad Tu'aymah, *Shāhid ḥaqq : ṣirā' al-sulṭah : Najīb, 'Abd al-Nāṣir, 'Āmir, al-Sādā* [Truthful Witness: Najib, Abdul Nasser, Amir, Sadat] (Cairo: A. Tu'aymah, 1999), 172.

meetings debating whether to intervene in Yemen, Sadat strongly urged aiding the Republicans.[368]

Sadat's advocacy to use Egyptian aid to help the Republican regime in Yemen explains Sadat's passionate attachment to the Republican cause. In a meeting with Ambassador Badeau on September 27, Sadat expressed his full support for the Free Officers in Yemen. During that meeting, Sadat, also, displayed his concerns for American support to the Royalists by warning Badeau that assistance to them was a "grave mistake" because "most of Yemen's intelligentsia supported the coup."[369] Sadat hinted to Badeau that the White House was siding with the losing side.

Nasser knew that Egypt's involvement in Yemen had the potential to harm Egyptian-American relations. Once Nasser decided to support the Yemeni rebellion, however, he attempted to guarantee the mission's success by preventing outside powers from meddling in Yemen in order to reverse the revolution—especially American interference. What concerned Nasser and Sadat most was American support for the rebels. Both men worried that the Yemen issue had the potential to create a diplomatic maelstrom that would destroy the close bond d between Kennedy and Nasser. This uneasiness originated from Nasser's determination to see the success of the Yemen campaign. Nasser and Sadat knew that success in Yemen hinged on keeping the Royalists isolated, which meant convincing Washington that the Royalist forces were a lost cause.

As Nasser formulated a strategy concerning Western intervention in Yemen, he also attempted to take advantage of the civil war to advance his domestic policy. As mentioned in

[368] Heikel , *Autumn* of Fury, 32.
[369] Telegram from the Department of State to Secretary of State (Rusk), September 27, 1962, *FRUS 1962-1963*, Vol. 18:142.

chapter two, due to economic stagnation and political turmoil, Nasser suffered domestically. Indeed, 1962 was the year that Nasser transformed Egypt into a one-party system under the ASU as part of this domestic reformation. As a result of domestic reforms, Yemen became Nasser's quixotic answer to his domestic troubles. He wanted use the conflict in Southwestern Arabia to solve his domestic problems as well as his difficulties with his political rivals in the RCC such as Abdul Hakim Amir and Shams Badran.

The turmoil within the ruling inner circle that began after the Suez Crisis in 1956 continued to simmer in 1962. The conflict among the Free Officers rapidly intensified until September—the eve of the Yemeni revolution—and weighed heavily on Nasser's decision to send troops to Yemen.[370] As Amir's power increased within the army, he affected its development by awarding obedience while sacking those who showed initiative.[371] Amir's control of the military allowed him to appointment officers who were loyal only to him. Amir saturated the military with incompetent loyalists who were resistant to reform.[372] This stratagem, however, eroded the fighting capability of the army—a process that continued until the Six Day War.[373] Two camps emerged from this rivalry between Nasser and Amir: those who sided with Nasser on domestic and military issues and those who sided with Amir on martial matters. Indeed, on the eve of the Yemeni civil war, two states existed in Egypt—a military state led by Amir and a civilian one led by Nasser.[374] Lieutenant-General Madkr Abu al-Az explains that Nasser knew that Amir's methods corroded the army, and on the eve of the Yemeni conflict he began to restructure the military by reshuffling his commanders.[375]

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[370] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol. 2:167.
[371] Ibid., 168.
[372] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1 :430-431.
[373] Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation*, 160.
[374] Ibid., 170.
[375] Jawādī *Mudhakkirāt qādat al-'askarīyah al-Miṣrīyah, 1973*, 104; Abu al-Az became a lieutenant-general in the air force as a result of this this reshuffling.

While Amir's influence in the military grew, his power within the Presidential Council declined. During one meeting of the executive council to vote on the reorganization of the military, the council was unevenly split, as Nasser's supporters outnumbered Amir's.[376] Although the measure would have improved the qualification for field commanders, Amir resisted the measure because the change would have sacked his loyalist from the military causing him to lose influence and power.[377] Disappointed with the outcome of the committee, Amir stormed out of the meeting. He later disclosed to the Minister of Local Government Kamel al-Din Hussein that he planned to resign his commission.[378] If Amir meant to provoke Nasser, it worked. Amir knew that Kamel al-Din would inform the RCC on Amir's move.[379] A hysterical Nasser worried that the Field Marshall's move would cause his loyalist to follow suit leading to a military coup.[380] The outbreak of the Yemeni civil war in September 1962 presented Nasser with an opportunity to remove Amir from the political scene in Egypt.[381]

Another issue that influenced Nasser's decision to send troops to the remote mountains of Yemen was the United States. As a result of PL-480 food aid program, American support was vital for Nasser, and Egyptian intervention in Yemen risked the loss of that food aid. Yemen had the potential to end Egyptian-American relations and convince Kennedy. From 1958 to 1963, American-Egyptian relations continued to improve. Yemen, however, would drive a wedge in American-Egyptian relations in 1964 during the Johnson years.[382]

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[376] Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1 :430-431.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Baghdādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī* vol. 2:169; Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1 :430-431.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid., 169-170.
[381] Sami Sharif gives an account Amirs involvement in in the Yemen conflict in his memoirs; see Sharaf, *Sanawāt wa-ayyām ma'a Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir*, vol. 1:433-437. See also 'Abd Allah Imām, *Nasir wa 'Amir* [Nasser and Amir] (Cairo: Rūz al-Yūsuf, 1985).
[382] Little, *American Orientalism*, 183.

After considering Sadat's recommendations and taking precautions before sending Egyptians to Yemen, Nasser decided, on September 29, 1962, that it was in his best interest to support the YAR.[383] Once Nasser decided to help the Republican forces, he wanted to insure the success of the mission. When Egyptian troops, therefore, deployed to Yemen within three days after the outbreak of the civil war, they did it so rapidly that outside observers saw the conflict in Yemen as part of Nasser's plan to revitalize his image after Syria.[384] However, Nasser's road to war was a carefully calculated move that included Sadat's recommendation, Amir's growing influence, and American-Egyptian relations.

Komer's War[385]

Upon sending Egyptian advisers to Yemen, Nasser executed a diplomatic offensive to secure American support for his scheme in Yemen. Sadat and Badeau met on September 30 to discuss Egyptian concerns over rumors that Washington was considering giving aid to the Royalists.[386] When Badeau explained to Sadat that the reports were false and that the United States did not intend to interfere in the civil war, Sadat expressed his gratification that the United States stood with Egypt on this issue.[387] Sadat nonetheless worried that either Britain, Saudi Arabia or the oil lobby would sway the White House to aid the Royalists.[388] In addition to the Sadat-Badeau conference, Nasser sent Foreign Minister Mahmoud Fawzi to meet with Secretary

[383] Muhammad Hsananyn Heikal, *Mu'assasat al-Ahrām* [al-Ahram Center for Research] (Cairo: Markaz al-Ahrām lil-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 1988), 618-619, NPBU.
[384] Ibid. See also Badeau, *The American Approach to the Middle East*, 125-126.
[385] John S. Badeau, February 25, 1969, JFKLOH.
[386] Telegram from the Embassy in the UAR to the Department of State, October 1, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:150.
[387] Ibid.; also see Telegram from the Department of State to Rusk, September 27, 1962, *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. 18:141.
[388] Ibid.

of State Dean Rusk in New York to communicate that Nasser was "anxious that there be no outside intervention in Yemen."[389]

From a strategic and economic standpoint, Yemen was negligible to the United States. But as far as the White House was concerned, the conflict in Yemen had the potential to spill over into neighboring countries and ignite a wider conflict.[390] Badeau warned Sadat that the White House expected Cairo to persuade the YAR to contain the conflict to Yemen and not allow it to spill over into Aden or Saudi Arabia.[391] On October 10, Heikal presented a personal message from Nasser to Kennedy, stating that Nasser agreed with Washington's assessment to keep the civil war contain to Yemen, but—Nasser added—there was evidence Saudi Arabia and Jordan were providing military aid to the Royalists.[392] Kennedy's decision to stay out of Yemen and allow the Mideast powers (Saudi Arabia and Egypt) to meddle in the YAR unchecked caused repercussions both for Kennedy and for successor—Lyndon Johnson—to deal with.

What was foundation of Kennedy's approach in Yemen? The administration's attitude towards Yemen can be understood through the Kuwaiti crisis of June 1961. Kassem remained Nasser's main rival among the pan-Arab nationalists in 1961, and his ideology was driven by this. When Britain granted Kuwait independence in June 1961, Kassem proclaimed Kuwait the nineteenth province of Iraq. As far as the White House was concerned, the newly-independent Kuwait—like South Arabia—was an Arab problem. The administration's concern towards Kuwait stemmed from American's postwar petroleum approach towards the Persian Gulf: to keep the area stable and oil flowing to the West.[393] During the Kuwait crisis, Nasser and Prince

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[389] Ibid.
[390] John S. Badeau, *The American Approach to the Arab World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 132.
[391] Telegram From the Embassy in the UAR to State, October 1, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:150-151; see also Telegram from State to Rusk, September 27, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:141.
[392] Telegram from the Embassy in the UAR to the Department of State, October 10, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:174-175.
[393] Fain, *American Ascendance and the British Retreat*, 115-116.

Faysal found themselves allied against Kassem.[394] It was a rare moment in Arab politics—especially during the Arab cold war—that the two competing ideologies agreed that Kassem's brand of Arab nationalism was a bigger threat. Nasser supported Kuwaiti independence and both Kennedy and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan acknowledged Nasser's role in the crisis.[395]

Whitehall, however, took a different viewpoint towards the Yemeni crisis. London believed Nasser's move into South Arabia was a direct assault on Western interests in the Arabian Peninsula.[396] Since the Suez fiasco, Britain struggled to preserve its diminishing position in the Middle East. MacMillan sought to convince Kennedy that Nasser's move into Yemen threatened not only the "Crown Colony of Aden" but the whole postwar order in the Arabian Peninsula as well.[397] Prime Minster Macmillan struggled to persuade Kennedy to abandon his Nasser approach and not to recognize the YAR.[398] But as the Yemen conflict dragged on, the Kennedy administration had more pressing needs to attend to in October 1962.

The Yemeni mess landed the administration in a predicament. While attempting to focus on South Arabia, the White House also struggled to eject Soviet nuclear-tipped missiles from Cuba. For thirteen days in October, Yemen and Macmillan were afterthoughts for the White House. The oil and Israel lobby, however, forced Kennedy into a diplomatic black hole and pressured him to engage Nasser on Yemen. Robert "Bob" Komer, moreover, formulated a

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[394] In Saudi Arabia in the late 1950s and early 1960s there was a power struggle between Crown Prince Feisal and King Saud; see Nathan J. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*; also see Fain, *American Ascendance and the British Retreat*, 115-116.
[395] For American acknowledgement, see Memorandum to the Assistant Secretary of State, July 24, 1961, *FRUS 1961*-1963, Vol. 17:197-199; for British acknowledgements see Cairo to the FO, No. 747, 21 July 1961, FO 371/157396, TNA. For Kuwait appeals to the UAR, see *The Daily Telegraph*, July 12, 1961; for the actual voting and Iraq's withdrawal from the voting procedure see, "Kuwait Joins the Arab League," al-*Ahram*, July 21, 1961.
[396] Fain, *American Ascendance and the British Retreat,* 123.
[397] Ibid.
[398] Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet, December 6, 1962, CAB/128/36, TNA.

strategy that advocated a more aggressive approach to oppose Nasser in South Arabia, such as shooting down Egyptian planes that violated Saudi Arabia's airspace, and he "ran herd on" Foggy Bottom and Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East Phillips Talbot when it came to American-Egyptian relations.[399] Komer, Badeau explains, was "chiefly responsible in the White House staff" for the administration's attitudes towards Egypt.[400]

Kennedy faced a dilemma of his own. If the White House sided with Nasser, it meant abandoning Macmillan and the conservative Arab regimes—and possibly the Western position in the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand, if Kennedy chose to side against Nasser, it meant forsaking the détente between Cairo and Washington.[401] In response, Kennedy stalled. He sent feelers to London, Jidda, and Cairo explaining the administration's position.[402] Meanwhile, McMillian wrote Kennedy that he was concerned that the recognition of the YAR would hurt Anglo-American policy in the region to the extent that it would reverse many of the accomplishments of the past such as the joint operations into Lebanon and Jordan in 1958 that saved King Husayn and President Chamoun from the Nasserist.[403]

The president told Macmillan he would delay recognition of the YAR until Whitehall was ready. At the same time, Kennedy told Nasser that the United States would recognize the YAR.[404] Nasser—in exchange for the White House assurances for recognition—assured Kennedy that the conflict would be contained to Yemen and would not spread into Saudi Arabia. He also guaranteed Badeau a phased withdrawal from Yemen in exchange for Saudi and

[399] John S. Badeau, February 25, 1969, JFKLOH.
[400] Ibid.
[401] Memorandum for Assistant Secretary Talbot, October 12, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:177.
[402] Telegram from the State Department to UAR Embassy, November 10, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:209-211.
[403] Text contained in Foreign Office Telegram, London to Washington, 15 November 1962, FO 371/162957.
[404] Message from Kennedy to Macmillan, November 15, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:223-224.

Jordanian withdrawal.[405] By November 1962, however, Nasser was knee deep in the Yemeni morass and withdrawal at that point meant an end of Nasserism.[406] As a result of Nasser's Yemeni quagmire, Kennedy's worst fears were realized when Nasser escalated the war by attacking Saudi Arabian frontier villages—spilling the conflict across Yemen's border into Saudi Arabia.[407]

The civil war in Yemen came at crucial moment for King Saud. The power struggle between Faysal and Saud that began in the late 1950s continued. As a result of corruption and the domestic struggle for reform and modernization, discontent in the kingdom persisted. When the revolution broke out in Yemen, Faysal was inundated with calls for social change. A group of exiled Saudi princes renounced their royal titles and christened themselves the Free Princes. From Cairo—the epicenter of Arab revolutionary change—the Free Princes led by Talal ibn Abd al-Aziz called for a democratic Saudi Arabia.[408] Faysal attempted to downplay the influence and appeal of the Free Princes, but when Saudi and Jordanian pilots defected in droves, Faysal panicked and grounded his air force.[409] Nasserism had reached the impregnable Saudi Kingdom.

Nasser, Kennedy, and Aramco

The White House determined that Yemen was dangerous for two reasons: first, it gave the Soviet Union an opportunity to take advantage of the turmoil and establish a foothold on the

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[405] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the UAR, November 10, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:209. Also see Heikal *the Cairo Documents*, 116-117.
[406] Staff Memorandum: The Yemen Revolution: Domestic Prognosis and the Aria Implications, November 19, 1962, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[407] Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet November 8, 1962 CAB/128/36, TNA; see also Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia, November 7, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18: 203-205. This was disputed by the Egyptians because the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen was in dispute; see Frank Jungers, "From Construction Engineer to CEO and Chairman of Aramco, 1948-1978," an Oral History conducted in 1992 by Carole Kicke, in *American perspectives of Aramco, the Saudi-Arabian Oil-Producing Company, 1930s to 1980s* Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, 1995 [hereafter ROH Berkley].
[408] Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC,* 146.
[409] Heikal, *Cairo Documents*, 214-215.

strategically important Red Sea; and second, the conflict made it difficult for Kennedy to maintain relations with Nasser. Congress and the oil lobby pressured the White House to abandon the administration's Nasser strategy. The oil lobby, led by the Arab-American Oil Company (Aramco), raised concerns as early as September about Nasser's political ambitions in South Arabia.[410] Aramco executives feared Nasser's revolutionary pan-Arab propaganda influenced their Saudi workers and threatened Aramco assets in the Persian Gulf.[411] Indeed, Nasser's pan-Arabism triggered protests among Aramco workers in the 1950s and early 1960s.[412] Aramco also used its financial strength to pay Mideast newspapers to run anti-Nasser stories that attacked the Egyptian leader's image as a pan-Arabist.[413] Congress, Aramco, and the Israel lobby found a common enemy and complicated the administration's rapprochement with Nasser.

When Nasser flooded Yemen with his troops on January 11, 1963, Aramco executives requested a meeting with Kennedy, but Phillips Talbot met with them instead.[414] Aramco's Vice President, R. I. Brougham told Talbot and John J. McCloy, the President's Special Emissary, that Nasser's moves in Yemen endangered American oil interests in the Persian Gulf.[415] Brougham spearheaded the effort by Aramco and the oil companies to convince the administration to abandon its Nasser strategy. If Brougham wanted the administration to change course, Kennedy disappointed him and intractably stood by the UAR.[416]

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[410] Political Activities in Yemen, William E. Mulligan Papers, Box: 3 Fold: 15 AAD, Chronological Files, Sep. - Oct. 1962, Special Collections Division, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. [hereafter WEM].
[411] Ibid., box 4, folder 18.
[412] Ibid., box 8, folder 8.
[413] Said Aburish, *Rise Corruption & Coming Fall House Saud* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 282.
[414] Memorandum of Conversation, January 11, 1963, NSF, Box 446, Komer files, UAR 1/63-11/63, White House Memoranda, JFKL.
[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid.

On January 28, Aramco made another push to convince the White House that Nasser threatened American interests by sending former CIA agent Kermit Roosevelt Jr. to the White House—a strategic move Brougham hoped would succeed. Roosevelt, the grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt, was the protagonist in the Iranian coup against Mohammad Mossadegq in 1953. By sending Roosevelt, Brougham perhaps hoped that using a former inside man might help persuade Kennedy to terminate his Nasser policy.

Roosevelt came armed with a secret message from Nasser. He met Bob Komer and told him that Nasser revealed in a "long conservation" in the past that American and Egyptian interests in the Mideast were incompatible. Roosevelt added that the State Department exaggerated Nasser's capability and that Faysal was on the verge of a military victory in the Yemen.[417] Roosevelt, it seemed, wanted to convince Komer that the administration was betting on the wrong horse and that Faysal and the Royalists would triumph in Yemen. After listening to Roosevelt's pleas, Komer assured him that the administration was not "pro-Nasser" and abandoning him meant that the Eastern bloc was his only alternative.[418] Talbot and other State Department officials briefed Kennedy that the oil companies were extremely anti-Nasser and would be loath to see him win in Yemen, and they thought that the administration as "throwing Faysal and the companies to the dogs."[419]

The oil companies continued to lobby the White House in the coming weeks and months.[420] Aramco Chairman Frank Junger explains that Yemen, the Red Sea, and the Suez

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[417] Memorandum for the Record, January 28, 1963, NSF, Box 446, Komer files, UAR 1/63-11/63, White House Memoranda, JFKL.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Memorandum for the Record, February 25, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol.18:363-366.
[420] See, for example, Telegram from State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia, February 15, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol .18:350-351; Memorandum for the Record, February 25, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:363-366; and Memorandum for the Record, March 26, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:436-437.

Canal all became vital to the oil companies, which was vital to the economies of Europe.[421] According to the oil lobby, Nasser's adventure in Yemen threatened not only their Aramco's petrodollars, but Washington's Cold War strategy as well.

Events in February and March 1963 strengthened Kennedy's approach towards Nasser and discredited Roosevelt's report to Komer that Faysal was on the verge of victory. In February, Kassem was overthrown by Abdul Salam Mohammed Arif—a Nasserite. Amin al-Hafiz and other Ba'athists in Syria overthrew the government that ended the UAR in 1961. As Nasser's enemies in the region toppled, it seemed that Nasserism was on the march. To Washington policy makers, it appeared that Nasser had outflanked Saudi Arabia from the north in Iraq and Syria and from the south in Yemen.[422]

Israel, Nasser, and Yemen

In December 1962, Nasser commemorated the sixth anniversary of the Suez War by attacking Saudi Arabia and Jordan as myrmidons of the Zionist-led Crusaders.[423] When Nasser associated Jordan and Saudi Arabia with a Zionist-led Crusade, he meant colonialism. During the Crusades, certain Mideast states aligned themselves with the Latin Kingdom, which suggested that Saudi Arabia and Jordan were no different. Nasser continued his history lesson and reminded the crowd gathered in Republic Square that Egypt also handed the Mongol-Tatar armies their first defeat.[424] Nasser's speech that December was significant for two reasons. First, it affiliated Israel with the Crusades and the Western tradition of colonialism—which many Arabs perceived began in the eleventh century. In Nasser's assessment, Israel too, like the

[421] Frank Jungers, "From Construction Engineer to CEO and Chairman of Aramco, 1948-1978," ROH Berkley.
[422] Memorandum for the Record, June 10, 1963 NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[423] Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at Port Said in Celebration of the Sixth Anniversary of [Suez War] Victory, December 23, 1962, al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.
[424] Referring to the Egyptian Mamluk victory at *Ain Jalut* [the Spring of Goliath] in 1260CE.

Crusader states before it, will one day be destroyed. Second, Nasser associated himself with Salah al-Din—who defeated the Crusaders—and Saif al-Din Qutuz—who handed the Mongols their first defeat. Like Sala al-Din and Saif al-Din, Nasser too would defeat the invaders in which case he meant Israel and Western colonialism.[425]

We cannot be certain whether Nasser intended to provoke Israel or simply give Egyptians another speech aggrandizing Egypt's history. The latter is probably the case, though, because Nasser was known for his undiplomatic grandstanding, and he did not intend to take the Arab-Israeli conflict out of the freezer or "ice box." [426] His attack, however, came at dangerous juncture in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nasser's troop movements into Southwestern Arabia and the influx of Soviet weapons into Egypt propelled Israel into a military tailspin, as Israel officials saw Nasser's move as a threat to Israel's security

Israel's concern for Nasser's struggle in Yemen derived from its protracted fight opposing the nationalist regimes in the region. Like the oil companies, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Britain, and Israel regarded Yemen's conservative regime a strategic asset because it was a counterweight to Nasserism. In September 1962—when Nasser moved into Yemen—Israeli intelligence tracked his first movements into South Arabia.[427] Foreign Minister Golda Meir told Kennedy that Nasser's march into South Arabia and American reluctance to condemn him was reminiscent of "appeasement" in 1938.[428] As a result of its security dilemma, Israel, sent military aid to the Royalists in hopes that Nasser's forces would be indefinitely bogged down in

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[425] Ibid.
[426] Egyptian Ambassador Mustafa Kamel first used the "freezing" when referring to the Arab-Israeli conflict in Memorandum of Conversation, February 8, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 17:18-20; for continuation of "ice box" strategy see Telegram to the UAR Embassy, July 23, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:656-658.
[427] *Aman*, Special Intelligence Survey No. 137/586.130.1/0, Oct. 22, 1962, "The Revolution in Yemen: An Interim Summary," HZ 3449/27, ISA.
[428] The *Times*, November 13, 1962.

Yemen.[429] Egyptian intelligence suspected Israeli involvement in Yemen, which might explain Nasser's verbal attack towards Israel in December.[430]

On December 27, 1962, Meir met Kennedy in Palm Beach, Florida to express Israeli concerns over Egypt's weapons buildup. Meir told Kennedy that Israeli intelligence tracked Soviet shipments of TU-16s to Egypt.[431] She also reiterated the danger that the TU-16s posed because they have "been able to fly from Egypt to Yemen, drop bombs and fly back to Egypt. If they can do that, what could they do to Israel?"[432] To drive the point home, Meir added, "the Egyptians are making preparations for radiological warfare. The warheads are to be filled with materials that would contaminate the land for years and years."[433]

Kennedy's Peace Efforts

By February 1963, Egyptian forces fought a counterinsurgency with their Republican allies in the mountainous terrain of Yemen. Fifteen thousand Egyptians were not enough to defeat the Royalists, and Nasser found himself sending more Egyptians to die in the YAR.[434] As the conflict intensified, Kennedy's fears materialized when the CIA reported that seven hundred Soviet specialist and technicians were in Yemen.[435] In June, Egypt stepped up its attacks and used an unidentified gas on the Royalists.[436]

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[429] Uri Dan, *Ariel Sharon: An Intimate Portrait* (New York: St. Marin's Press, 2007), 118; also see Miller, Anita, Jordan Miller, and Sigalit Zetouni, *Sharon: Israel's Warrior-Politician* (Chicago, Ill: Academy Chicago Publishers & Olive publishing, 2002), 69: Ariel Sharon and David Chanoff, *Warrior: the autobiography of Ariel Sharon*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).
[430] According to Heikal Israel, the CIA and the Saudis were all working together against Egypt; see Heikal, *Autumn of Fury*, 32.
[431] Memorandum of Conversation, December 27, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:278.
[432] Memorandum of Conversation, January 31, 1961, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 17:11.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Rogan and Tclimandos, "The Yemen War and Egypt's War Preparedness," in Avi Shlaim and William Roger Louis ed., *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 152.
[435] Current Intelligence Memorandum: The Soviet Presence in Yemen, May 7, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[436] Current Intelligence Memorandum: the Situation in Yemen, June 7, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

To maintain stability and the postwar petroleum order, Kennedy appointed Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker as Special Emissary to Yemen in April 1963 to end the conflict—the so called Bunker Mission. The American disengagement plan called for a UAR troop withdrawal followed by a Saudi and Jordanian withdrawal. The Republican forces, however, continued their unremitting fight to rid the countryside of Royalists, and Egypt continued to increase its military presence in South Arabia.[437] Heikal explains that both Kennedy and Nasser attempted to reduce tension in South Arabia and find a solution to the civil war, but he blames Saudi Arabia.[438] Nasser already accepted the Kennedy administration's disengagement plan of November 1962, but Faysal and Hussein bitterly opposed.[439] The Bunker Mission in April 1963 presented a new hope peace. By June 1963, Bunker's peace efforts failed due to mutual suspicion by Faysal and Nasser and Kennedy decided to invest more in the United Nations Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM) than direct intervention.[440]

By May 1963, Nasser's generals noticed a dangerous trend in the Egyptian military. General Muhammad Sudki Mahmoud reported to Nasser that the military lacked modern weapons and pled for their supply. However, Nasser, Amir, and the Presidential Council chose to ignore General Mahmoud's pleas. [441] Others, like Lieutenant-General Anwar al-Qadi, reportedly complained to Amir that the war was increasingly become an unwinnable one.[442] The fighting in Yemen not only drained Egypt of manpower, but was a burden on its financial resources, which diluted the performance of the army. By the summer of 1963, Nasser spent 80 million Egyptian

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[437] Ibid.
[438] Heikal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān*, 647-648.
[439] Memorandum for the President, November 21, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1962*, Vol. 18:237-238; Memorandum for President, November 28, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:238-239; Telegram from the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State, November 19, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:229-236.
[440] Clive Jones, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War*, 68.
[441] Jawādī, *Mudhakkirāt qādat al-'askarīyah al-Miṣrīyah,* 369.
[442] Muḥammad Muḥammad Jawādī, *al-Ṭarīq ilá al-naksah : mudhakkirāt qādat al-'askarīyah al-Miṣrīyah 1967* [The Road to the Setback: the Memoirs of the Egyptian Military Commanders] (Cairo: Dār al-Khayyāl, 2000), 251.

pounds a month and sent more troops into Yemen.[443] Yemen—the panacea to Nasser's political dilemma at home and abroad—instead proved to be a trap.

Conclusion

Yemen became an ideological struggle for Nasser comparable to America's Cold War struggle against Communism, and for Nasser, withdrawal was not an option.[444] Yemen was a proxy war between two competing ideologies in the Near East. Although Israel secretly armed the Royalists, it remained on the sidelines in the conflict and hoped that Nasser would at least receive a black eye or a bloody nose in Yemen. With no political or strategic objective and no exit strategy, the Yemen morass became Nasser's Vietnam.[445] The mountainous war overwhelmed Nasser's forces and bogged down the best of his fighters in South Arabia for five long years.

Perhaps Nasser's principal blunder in Yemen was to allow Amir to direct the war strategy. In Syria, Amir proved incompetent in his management of the country and the outcome of his ironfisted policy was the infamous *infisal* (breakup). By seeking a solution to his political dilemma in Egypt and seeking to regain his prestige in the Middle East by going to Yemen, Nasser instead created a defense dilemma for himself. Yemen was the catalyst of Nasser's defense dilemma with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Britain in the Middle East and the arms race ideological battle. The end result of which was the deterioration in American-Egyptian relations. Anwar Sadat later explained that the Six Day War did not begin in 1967, but the war actually began years before in Yemen.[446]

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[443] Memorandum of Conversation September 30, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:717.
[444] Staff Memorandum: The Yemen Revolution: Domestic Prognosis and the Aria Implications, November 19, 1962, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[445] Eugene Rogan and Tewfik Aclimandos, "The Yemen War and Egypt's War Preparedness," in *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences*, 150.
[446] Anwar Sadat, *The Public Diary of President Sadat vol 1*: 224.

In dealing with the Yemen, the Kennedy administration attempted to satisfy both the Saudis and Egyptians. They also attempted to prevent the conflict from spreading by maintaining a "quarantine" of Yemen, which meant preventing offensive weapons from coming in.[447]American policymakers continuously fought to keep Saudi Arabia and the postwar petroleum order secure and constantly warned Nasser not to encroach on the oil kingdom.[448] To the White House, Nasser's intentions in Saudi Arabia were unclear. By January 1963, both Kennedy and Nasser wanted to end the Yemeni conflict and both hoped that Yemen would "quietly slide into the Indian Ocean."[449] Yemen destroyed the balance of power in the Middle East and disturbed the "ice box" theory. Yemen also ruined the White House's plans for Nasser. Kennedy hoped to turn Nasser away from socialism and towards democracy and American capitalism, but Yemen got in the way of Kennedy's and Nasser's plans.[450]

Naval Message, "General Rules for Engagement," March 6, 1963, NSF, Box 104, LBJL.
[448] John S. Badeau, February 25, 1969, JFKLOH.
[449] Copeland, *The Game of Nations*, 266.
[450] John S. Badeau, February 25, 1969, JFKLOH.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHANTOM GOVERNMENTS AND THE PORTENTS OF WAR

I believe that the UAR regime, more than any other government about which I am informed, attaches some credibility to the "Invisible Government" theory.
-James H. Critchfield

In 1963, the Free Officers believed that two forces fought an endless battle for control of the American government. The perception that a shadow government dominated the White House permeated the Free Officers' minds. When President Kennedy declared his intention to give aid to Nasser and Congress attempted to undermine the executive decision, Nasser and the Free Officers interpreted Congressional moves as an invisible hand operating behind the curtain, prodding the White House to sever aid with Egypt.[451] Badeau once attempted to explain the division of power in the American government to Nasser, but he was unsuccessful in persuading the Egyptian premier the checks and balances of the American system.[452] To sketch inconsistencies in America's policy towards Egypt, Mustafa Kamel, Egypt's ambassador to the United States, persistently described the "invisible government" theory to Kennedy's officials.[453] After Kennedy's assassination, this theory became indelibly imprinted in Nasser's mind and the Presidential Council's imagination. For Nasser, all his problems in Yemen and the Middle East led to the phantom government in Washington.[454]

Egyptian speculations concerning shadow governments within the American system increased during the Yemeni civil war. Nasser's offensive in Yemen to spearhead a pan-Arab renaissance, after the Syrian's separation from the UAR, trapped the best of his troops in a seemingly endless bloody guerilla war. This was Egypt's costliest war, one that challenged

[451] Heikal, *the Cairo Documents*, 205.
[452] John S. Badeau Oral History JFKOH, February 25, 1969, JFKL.
[453] Critchfield to Komer, September 10, 1965, Robert Komer NSF, Box 51, LBJL
[454] Ibid.

Nasser more than any other Mideast issue he had faced in the past.[455] Were the YAR to slip into Faysal's sphere of influence, it meant a death blow to Nasserism at a time when Ba'athists were on the march throughout the Mideast.[456] In September 1963, the Ba'athists continued their barrage of accusations towards Nasser, accusing him of "abandoning" Arab unity. Surrounded by enemies on all sides, Nasser attempted in 1963 to mend the differences between the Ba'athists and Nasserists through unity talks. But in November as the Ba'athists stepped-up their attacks on the Nasserist in Syria, he rejected to sit down with the Syrian Ba'athists.

Yemen also trapped Nasser in a diplomatic quagmire that paralyzed American-Egyptian relations and destroyed any chance of a Johnson-Nasser relationship similar to the cordial Kennedy-Nasser one. Egyptian belligerence in Yemen together with border raids into Saudi Arabia and assistance to the rebellion in Aden strained diplomatic ties further between Washington and Cairo. A relationship of "mutual respect and understanding" persisted between Kennedy and Nasser, but on the eve of Kennedy's assassination, the "cool but correct policy" encountered a setback due to the civil war in Southwest Arabia.

After Kennedy's death, Nasser feared a *coup de main* from the conspicuously pro-Israeli LBJ. Johnson wrote Nasser in February 1964 to assure him that the United States would continue Kennedy's "policy of constructive cooperation."[457] Domestic pressure, however, forced Johnson to reverse many of Kennedy's approaches towards Nasser, and the hidden blemishes that began to appear in Kennedy's final year in office became visible after November 22, 1963.

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[455] Jesse Ferris, "Soviet Support for Egypt's Intervention in Yemen, 1962–1963," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 10:4 (Fall 2008), 5-36.
[456] In March 1963, Ba'athists in Syria seized power and began a campaign to unite Syria with Iraq, which was opposed by Nasser because a union between Iraq and Syria would have strengthen the Ba'athists and weakened the Nasserists.
[457] Letter from President Johnson to President Nasser, February 27, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1967*, Vol: 18:45.

This chapter covers the beginning of the end of American-Egyptian relations during the Nasser era[458] by focusing on how four issues bedeviled that relationship and substantiated Egyptian claims to the invisible government theory. These four problems included: (1) the Nasserist-Ba'athist rivalry in MENA; (2) the Conservative-Nasserite proxy war in Yemen; (3) the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Levant; and (4) the disagreement in Washington over American aid to Egypt. All four issues played a crucial role in changing Johnson's approach towards Egypt and Egyptian attitudes towards the United States, which in turn fueled Nasser's fear of isolation and hopelessness in the aftermath of the Syrian schism and the Yemeni morass. As the Johnson administration initiated a new diplomatic approach towards Egypt to satisfy American lobby groups, Nasser grew desperate and attempted to showcase Egypt's importance to Washington's postwar Mideast strategy by fomenting crises in Africa and the Middle East. The outcome was a volatile environment in which any incident—big or small—risked sparking another Mideast war.

The Nasserist-Ba'athist Rivalry

The dispute between the Nasserists and Ba'athists over how to define and implement pan-Arab nationalism continued in 1963. Part of Nasser's fixation with Yemen stemmed from his dream of becoming relevant to the Arab nationalist. Yemen became a testing ground for Nasserism. If it could not defeat a few scattered Bedouin tribes in the mountains of Yemen, then how could Nasserism defeat, the Israeli army in the valleys of Levant? Due to Nasser's Yemen quagmire it seemed that Nasserism was in decline.

Yet this situation was soon reversed, as the anti-Kassem coup in February 1963 yielded the Nasserite Abdul Salam Arif in Iraq and the March Revolution in Syria produced a pro-Nasser

[458] I define the Nasser era as the period from 1956 to 1970. In the case of this study, American-Egyptian relations end as a result of the Six Day War and remain so until Anwar Sadat's presidency.

coalition government. The regional repercussion of the military coups in Iraq and Syria, which cleared the way for a dialogue on Arab unity, was the elevation of Nasser's Arab vanguard initiative. Rumors spread throughout the Arab streets that an Arab federation was being considered. Nasser's obsession for leadership of Arab nationalism compelled him to listen to the hearsay and propelled him—after the humiliation of the UAR's breakup—to consider unity with the Ba'athists.

The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party (Ba'ath) was founded in 1940 by Michel Aflaq, Zaki al-Arsuzi, and Salah al-Din al-Bitar in Syria. All three represented Syria's three major religious groups—Christianity, Alawite, and Sunni Islam, respectfully. Ideologically, the Ba'athists were a secular non-Communist socialist group that advocated Arab unity from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf and have often been described as Nasserism without Nasser.[459] Nasser, however, was influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood and stressed that Sunni Islam had a role to play in Arab society, while the Ba'athists were steadfast secularists.[460]

A comparison between the Free Officers' bloodless coup in Egypt and the brutal Ba'athist revolutions in Iraq and Syria reveal the heavy-handedness and extremism of the Ba'athists as compared to the Nasserist. Where Nasser imprisoned his political opponents, the Ba'athists in Iraq and Syria indiscriminately executed political prisoners, maintained tight control of the media, and used conspiracy theories to ruthlessly suppress political enemies such as the Nasserists. Finally, the Ba'athists used unity as an excuse to rein in Nasserists in Syria and Iraq, not to form an alliance with Nasser.[461]

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[459] Office of Current Intelligence: "The Ba'athist Regimes in Syria and Iraq," September 27, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[460] Sulaymān Ḥakīm, *Asrār al-'alāqah al-khāṣṣah bayna 'Abd al-Nāṣir wa al-Ikhwān* [Personal Secrets between Abdul Nasser and the Muslim Brotherhood] (Jīzah: Markaz al-Ḥaḍārah al-'Arabīyah lil-I'lām wa-al-Nashr, 1996).
[461] Office of Current Intelligence: "The Ba'athist Regimes in Syria and Iraq," September 27, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

When sporadic pro-Nasser riots erupted throughout Syria in the spring of 1963, they exposed the ideological differences between the Ba'athists and Nasserists. On the defensive, the Ba'athists fired back with a daily verbal barrage of anti-Nasserist propaganda. Nasser circumspectly ignored the attacks, but when the Ba'athists began to attack Nasser personally, he flexed his ideological muscles through political speeches denouncing the Syrian Ba'athists government as a "suppressive-fascist-regime" that turned Syria into a large "concentration camp." This dramatic climax in the Ba'athist-Nasserist rivalry complicated Nasser's political agenda and entangled him in yet another inter-Arab rivalry that cost him both financially and ideologically.[462]

By December 30, Nasser's quest for supremacy of pan-Arab nationalism was seriously challenged by a well-organized Ba'athist party with a clearly defined ideology in the heart of the Arab world. Although President Arif scored Nasserism an ideological victory when he moved against the Ba'athists in Iraq, the stalemate in Yemen and Nasser's involvement in the Moroccan-Algerian conflict exacerbated his political dilemma.

Operation Hard Surface and Anglo-Egyptian Relations in Southwest Arabia

John F. Kennedy's famous charisma extended beyond the shores of the United States to Egypt, where he attracted Egyptians from the start. During his campaign for the presidency in 1959, Kennedy attacked the Eisenhower administration for unnecessarily enraging Arab nationalists and not working with them to advance American Cold War strategy.[463] Although Eisenhower had slightly reopened the door to American-Egyptian relations in 1958, Kennedy swung it wide open. The first opportunity to take advantage of this new opening presented itself

[462] "Unity with the Ba'ath Party," *Al-Ahram*, July 23, 1963.
[463] Tore Tingvold Petersen, "Crossing the Rubicon? Britain's Withdrawal from the Middle East, 1964-1968: A Bibliographical Review," *The International History Review,* vol. 22:2, (June 2000) p. 318-340.

with the Abu Simbel monuments in 1961 when Kennedy gave Nasser $10 million and offered assistance to preserve the ancient monuments. This symbolic gesture signaled the administration's modus operandi towards Nasserism, which stressed cultural and economic assistance to gain Nasser's trust and loyalty in regional affairs.[464] It also marked the beginning of the special relationship that developed between Kennedy and Nasser that continued throughout Kennedy's presidency.[465]

Yemen was the cardinal issue that caused seismic shifts in the special relationship between Kennedy and Nasser. When the White House recognized the YAR in December 1962—an incident that created a rift in the Anglo-American Mideast alliance—Nasser promised Kennedy he would not attack Saudi Arabia or Aden.[466] The Bunker Mission's miscarriage and the futile UN mediation, however, caused a proxy war to develop between Egypt and Saudi Arabia in which UAR-supported Republican troops raided Saudi frontier villages. By summer of 1963, the Yemeni civil war had taken its toll on U.S.-Egyptian relations, as Nasser's offensives in Yemen caused him to attack Saudi Arabia as well. To many Americans, Nasser's broken promises and belligerence in Southwest Arabia seemed reminiscent of Adolf Hitler's drive for *Lebensraum* and European empire.[467]

When the White House discovered that Nasser had parachuted supplies to partisans in the Hejaz, Kennedy's advisors suspected that he planned to invade Saudi Arabia.[468] In response, JFK ordered the US Navy to visit Saudi ports and use American military traffic to fly in and out of

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[464] Douglas Little, "The New Frontier on the Nile: JFK, Nasser, and Arab Nationalism," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 75:2 (Sep., 1998), 501-527.
[465] See chapter One for details on the Kennedy-Nasser relationship.
[466] See chapter Three.
[467] "Exile Unit Set Up by Hussein's Foes," *New York Times*, May 1, 1963.
[468] Hejaz is the Saudi province north of Yemen on the Red Sea; Komer to Kennedy, February 21, 1963 FRUS vol. 18:352-353.

the Saudi Arabia to "deter the UAR" from attacking the oil kingdom.[469] He also approved Operation Hard Surface in National Security Action Memorandum No. 227 (NSAM 227), which called on the United States Air Force (USAF) to protect Saudi airspace from UAR warplanes.[470]

Faysal, however, remained unconvinced by NSAM 227 and continued to press Kennedy for more direct military support. As a result, the White House stationed a USAF taskforce to the Saudi airfield at Dhahran and sent the U.S.S. Bristol and the U.S.S. F.T. Berry into the Red Sea with "rules of engagement" to intercept and engage UAR warships to protect American interest.[471] Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Britain, and Israel, however, undermined Hard Surface's success through their activities in the YAR, which included arming and supporting the Royalists. Indeed, Prime Minster Levi Eshkol's security strategy in 1963 was to trap Nasser in Yemen by indirectly supporting the Royalists while Israel developed its military through a five-year plan that attempted to modernize the Israeli military to swiftly move into Arab territory.[472]

While Nasser suspected Britain and Israel were involved in the Yemeni civil war, he could not prove it. On February 26, British and Aden Federation forces attacked Yemeni troops near Aden's border. Immediately after the attack, Nasser accused Whitehall of "imperialist aggression" in Southwest Arabia, but had no hard evidence to prove London's involvement.[473] Nasser also presumed British mercenaries were operating deep inside the YAR, but he could not substantiate this claim either. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's president, however, confirmed that mercenaries were indeed working against Nasser in the YAR. "It concerned me for you to

[469] Komer to Kennedy, February 21, 1963 *FRUS 1962-1963*, Vol. 18:352-353.
[470] National Security Action Memorandum No. 227, February 27, 1963, *FRUS 1962*-1963, Vol. 18:366-367.
[471] Washington to Embassy in Jidda, March 6, 1963, "Middle East Rules of Engagement," NSF Middle East, Box 104, Folder 7, LBJL.
[472] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 221.
[473] Central Intelligence Bulletin, February 28, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

know," Nkrumah told Nasser, "that a number of mercenaries are operating against you in Yemen."[474]

Nkrumah's claim was later substantiated when a UAR patrol near the Yemeni-Aden border captured a British mercenary with a secret plans for the Yemeni Royalists.[475] It was later learned that France also worked with Britain to undermine the UAR mission in Southwest Arabia.[476] Israeli weapons, British mercenaries, and French political support caused Nasser to dig in his heals in the Yemeni sand and complicate the White House's Hard Surface plans.

As more Egyptian resources and manpower were allocated for the Yemeni war effort and austerity measures were launched at home to defray the cost of the conflict, Nasser's popularity in Egypt and Yemen plummeted. The economic burden overwhelmed Egyptians to the extent that they openly criticized Nasser. Egyptians, it seemed, were genuinely concerned that Nasser's obsession in Yemen was leading Egypt over the cliff. What was most alarming to many Egyptians was the number of UAR soldiers being killed in the Southwest Arabia. Economic cutbacks, the high cost of food, the loss of Egyptian lives, and the decline of Egyptian prestige caused many to turn against Nasser. Some Egyptians were openly critical not only of the war, but of Nasser himself. Furthermore, Nasser's inner circle began to question the wisdom of his foreign policy, which overextended Egyptian resources and caused many to suffer at home.[477] As the Yemeni civil war took its toll on Nasser's prestige, it also tested his resolve. As he grew increasingly desperate, he looked for an opportunity to escape the Yemeni morass.

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[474] Haykal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān*, 666.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Britain and France's involvement in the Yemen civil war lies beyond the scope of this study. For more on Anglo-French involvement in the conflict, see Clive Jones, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War, 1962-1965: Ministers, Mercenaries: Foreign Policy and the Limits of Covert Action* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2004).
[477] CIA Memorandum, "Nasir's Present Political Position," October 11, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

As events would have it, Israel offered Nasser a solution. The Israeli government saw an opportunity to defeat Nasser in Southwest Arabia and, as a result, began to send aid to the Royalist forces in 1963. As Israeli aid to the Royalists increased throughout 1963, Nasser found it hard to keep his promise to the Kennedy administration to suspend the Arab-Israeli conflict by putting it in the "ice box." Israel complicated Washington's Mideast strategy further when it began to assassinate Nasser's scientists and their families.[478] Nasser saw these Israeli actions as an opportunity to unite the progressive Arabs behind him and attempted to link the Israel's "terror" campaign to the lack of Arab unity in Palestine and Yemen.[479] He declared that Arab unity did not run through Sana'a (Yemen's capital), but through Tel Aviv.[480] With Nasser's renewed call for the liberation of Palestine, Eshkol felt the blowback from Israel's anti-Nasser campaign. Israeli actions towards Nasser led to a direct threat to Israel's security because they gave the Egyptian leader what he needed most—an opportunity to restore his prestige by seeking Arab unity.[481]

In many respects, Israel's fears and its targeted assassinations were counterproductive and undermined the White House's Mideast strategy. The Arab nationalists were divided, Nasser's missile program had only "marginal military" value, and one-fourth of his forces were trapped in Yemen.[482] By November 1963, the Nasser-Ba'athist rivalry divided the progressive camp, as Nasser's allies sought to increase their influence in the midst of growing tide of Ba'athist regimes. While Israel continued to develop its military and nuclear capability through

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[478] Covert Israeli operations began targeting Egypt's missile program in 1962. In an interview with *Mahrar* Nasser revealed the assassination of six Egyptian workers by Israel. See "President Gamal Abudl Nasser Interview on Lebanese Unity, al-Mahrar, April 2, 1963.For a comprehensive look at Israeli responses to the Nasser's missile program, see Michael Bar-Zohar, *Spies in the Promised Land: Iser Harel and the Israeli Secret Service* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).
[479] "President Gamal Abdul Nasser Interview on Lebanese Unity," *al-Mahrar*, April 2, 1963.
[480] Ibid.
[481] Current Intelligence Memorandum, "Israeli Propaganda and the Arab Threat," May 17, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[482] Current Intelligence Memorandum, "The Israeli-Egyptian Arms Race, December 1963," NARA/CIA/ORIS.

its five-year program, the Arab world was entangled in the Yemeni web. London and Tel Aviv's stratagem to bog Nasser down in Yemen backfired and united the Arab nationalists behind him.

"Congressional Zionist" and Nasser

Britain and Israel were the last of Kennedy's worries in the Mideast. Congress complicated matters by holding hostage Kennedy's strategy of accommodating Nasser. Congressional efforts to force the White House to cut U.S. aid to Nasser began in early 1963 and continued until Kennedy's assassination. Senators Ernest Gruening of (Democrat of Alaska), Jacob Javits (Republican of New York), Kenneth Keating (Republican of New York), Hubert H. Humphrey (Democrat of Minnesota), and Representative Seymour Halpern (Republican of New York) began a fervent-bipartisan-anti-Nasser campaign to prevent American aid from reaching Egypt.[483] Gruening, Javits, Keating, Humphrey, and Halpern were all Congressional supporters of Israel, and American aid to Nasser, for them, meant harming Israel.

In April, a Congressional storm developed over Kennedy's approach to Nasser. Critics in the Senate accused the president of aiding Nasser's Nazi-like scheme for Israel.[484] The Senate called on Kennedy to sign a defense pact with Israel in order to guarantee its protection against Nasser, and Representative Halpern introduced a bill to sever all financial and food aid to Egypt.[485] Kennedy rejected the "Congressional Zionist" campaign in a Machiavellian fashion by attempting to find supporters of his policy on Capitol Hill and playing them against the Congressional Zionists. He also sought to go directly to Israeli officials and inform them that the "zealous Zionist attacks" were counterproductive to America's and Israel's Mideast strategy.[486]

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[483] Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 133.
[484] Warren Weaver Jr., "Aid to UAR stirs fight in Congress," *New York Times*, May 1, 1963.
[485] Ibid.
[486] Memorandum for the Record, May 1, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 17: 505-506.

The battle between the White House and Capitol Hill over Nasser continued in June when an American agent working for the Royalists asked Congress to sever all American food aid to Egypt. The agent's rationale for such a move was that Nasser used the revenue to buy weapons to use in Yemen.[487] Meanwhile, Senator Gruening continued his aggressive crusade to end aid to Nasser, which materialized with the Gruening Amendment. It passed in the Senate by a vote of 65 to 13 and modified the Foreign Assistant Act of 1961 to withhold American aid from states hostile to the United States.[488] Although the Gruening Amendment did not specifically state Nasser's name, it clearly targeted Egypt because it unambiguously specified agricultural aid in the Foreign Assistant Act.

Expressing no surprise at the Gruening Amendment, Nasser assumed that it was explicitly aimed at him. He thought that it was a typical case of neocolonialism because it placed restrictions on American aid to Egypt. With Kennedy's recent decision to sell Hawk surface-to-air missiles to Israel and the White House's indifference towards Israel's nuclear program, Nasser viewed the Gruening Amendment as a circuitous approach to aid Israel once again.[489]

Furious over Kennedy's Israel approach and Congressional action to aid Tel Aviv, Nasser summoned Badeau to his Cairo office to remind him of Egypt's importance in American Mideast strategy.[490] Nasser reiterated to Badeau that the pro-Israeli tactics were destroying the progress made in American-Egyptian relations since 1957. The Egyptian public repeated Nasser's claim that the Zionists controlled the U.S. government and cited the Senate's action as an example of this Israeli influence within the American government.[491]

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[487] Richard L. Lyons, "Yemen Royalist Agent Bids U.S. End UAR Aid," *The Washington Post*, June 22, 1963.
[488] Memorandum from Bundy to Senator Fulbright, November 11, 1963, *FRUS 1962-1963,* Vol. 18:775.
[489] Memorandum from Talbot to Rusk, November 18, 1963, *FRUS 1962-1963*, Vol. 18:792-793.
[490] Ibid.
[491] Central Intelligence Bulletin, November 12, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

Despite Yemen and the Gruening Amendment, the Nasser-Kennedy relationship continued to flourish. Kennedy knew the important role economic aid played in keeping Nasser in check, and the White House attempted to resist the anti-Nasser Congressional barrage by continuing food aid to Cairo. At a presidential news conference on November 14, Kennedy defended American food aid to Egypt and called the Gruening Amendment an attempt to end the administration's influence and bargaining power with the UAR.[492] Kennedy also persisted in his correspondence with Nasser and displayed through these communications his concern for Egypt's domestic and foreign affairs.[493] American prestige and creditability were also on the line. If the United States cut off the three year PL-480 agreement with Egypt midway before it ended, American credibility with the nonaligned world would suffer.[494] Ignoring Congress and continuing PL-480 aid to Egypt transcended helping Nasser.

Meanwhile, the war in Yemen continued to take its toll on American-Egyptian relations. Saudi Arabian and oil lobbyists pressured the White House to cut ties with Nasser. The oil companies argued that American aid to Nasser materialized as Egyptian aggression in Yemen while Saudi Arabia complained that Nasser used the surplus from American food aid to buy weapons to use against Saudi Arabia.[495] The Kennedy administration sought to shield itself from the bombardment by using its influence with Nasser to encourage him to continue his phased withdrawal from Yemen and to seek détente with Saudi Arabia by returning to Riyadh the

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[492] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January 20 to November 31, 1961* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Office, 1962-64), 850.
[493] See, for example, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the UAR, May 11, 1961 FRUS 1961-1963 vol. 17:111-113; Letter from Kennedy to Nasser, August 16, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:62; Nasser Correspondence Box 169, Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, United Arab Republic, Nasser Correspondence, JFKL.
[494] Ibid.
[495] Richard L. Lyons, "Yemen Royalist Agent Bids U.S. End UAR Aid," *The Washington Post*, June 22, 1963.

aircraft that defected to the UAR in 1962.[496] Kennedy attempted to satisfy Faysal and the oil companies by maintaining a land, sea, and air "quarantine" over Yemen.[497] The White House, authorized the U.S. Navy to "intercept" UAR warships and fighter planes entering Saudi territorial waters and "engage" them until the threat was eliminated.[498] Yet despite all this, Kennedy continued to send aid to Egypt and seek better relations with Nasser because he maintained his belief—like Eisenhower before him—that Egypt played an important role in America's postwar strategy.

During his term in the White House, Kennedy gave $500 million in aid to Egypt. The "Congressional Zionists," the Saudis, and the oil companies continued their efforts to try to terminate all aid to Nasser, and on the eve of Kennedy's assassination it appeared that the White House was ready to cave. To outside observers, it appeared that Nasser controlled Mideast events from Cairo and every move was seen as a calculated one for his grand design to gain dominance and empire in the region.[499]

Yet this was a misreading of Nasser's actual strategy. Rather than initiate actions, he reacted to regional events and then, once it began to appear that no political gains were possible, he attempted to find a way out. When the Yemen rebels traveled to Cairo pleading for Egyptian aid against the Royalists, Nasser was reluctant to send aid until he saw an opportunity for political gain. Yemen, however, demonstrated the weakness and inefficiency of the Egyptian army. Kennedy spent his final days attempting to resolve the Yemeni issue and find balance between Nasser and the anti-Nasser forces in Washington and Saudi Arabia. His successor,

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[496] Telegram from the State Department to the Embassy in the UAR, November 20, 1963 *FRUS 1962-1963*, Vol. 18: 795-796. See Chapter Three for defections of Saudi and Jordanian pilots to the UAR.
[497] Washington to Embassy in Jidda, November 13, 1962, "Middle East Rules of Engagement," NSF Middle East, Box 104, Folder 7, LBJL.
[498] Ibid.
[499] *US New and World Report*, February 11, 1963.

Lyndon Johnson, found it more difficult to maintain Kennedy's balance between the conservatives, the Israelis, and Nasser. He approached the issue differently and confronted Nasser.

Out of the Void: Lyndon Johnson Encounters the Middle East

A shockwave hit Cairo on November 22, 1963—one that forever transformed American-Egyptian relations. President Kennedy's assassination was not only a huge blow for Americans, but a blow to Egyptians as well. Egyptians throughout the Nile Valley were moved by Kennedy's tragic death and there was an unprecedented outpouring of sympathy for America's loss.[500] Although relations between Cairo and Washington were strained in Kennedy's final days, Kennedy's relatively friendly attitude towards Egypt seemed genuine to Egyptians and the White House pleas to both sides to end the conflict in Yemen appeared sincere. Nasser's state of mind immediately after Kennedy's slaying was hysterical and confused. When news of Kennedy's fate reached Nasser on the evening of the twenty-second, he rushed to his office to see what he could do and then realized, "my God, why have I dressed, why have I come here? There is nothing any of us can do about it?" Later that morning, Nasser ordered his aids to find what the assassination meant to American-Egyptian relations.[501]

Kennedy's death raised important questions for Egypt. Was the new administration going to continue Kennedy's approach or would it reverse course and sever ties with Cairo? An Egyptian diplomatic foray on Washington followed. Al-Ahram's front-page best summed up the air of anxiety in Egypt that cold November morning with a glaring headline in boldfaced font

[500] State Department Telegram, January 7, 1964, RG 59, POL.1 UAR-US, Box 2766, NARA.
[501] Haykal, *The Cairo Documents*, 222-224.

succinctly titled "Kennedy's Assassination."[502] Another headline attempted to define LBJ stated "Who is the man behind Kennedy?"[503]

Due to Kennedy's international programs such as the Peace Corps and the Agency for International Development, he radiated an aura of compassion globally. After Kennedy's assassination, Nasser worried that Johnson would reverse his predecessor's Middle East approach—an approach that was strained due to Yemen. The White House attempted reassures a shaken Nasser that the new administration intended to continue the Kennedy approach towards Egypt.[504]

As Johnson settled into the White House, however, he faced three issues that challenged this strategy and caused him to reassess his attitude towards Nasser. First, there was Yemen. Due to Nasser's heavy-handedness against the Royalists and his attacks on Saudi Arabia, the civil war in the southwestern Arabian Peninsula caused a laceration in American-Egyptian relations that continued to grow and complicate Washington's postwar petroleum order. Second, as the rivalry between the Ba'athists and Nasserists heated up again, the conflict forced Nasser to take drastic and radical steps to challenge the conservative and Ba'athists forces in MENA. Third, Nasser's attempt to reclaim leadership among the Arab nationalists caused him to abandon the "ice box" strategy, which heated up the Arab-Israeli conflict. These three issues strained relations between Cairo and Washington during the Johnson years.

Although Johnson wanted to devote his efforts and energies to domestic issues, events in Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Middle East prevented Johnson from focusing on problems in

[502] *Al-Ahram*, December 23, 1963
[503] Ibid.
[504] Memorandum from Talbot to Rusk, November 23, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18: 804-806.

the United States and instead forced him to look abroad.[505] Johnson also linked his foreign policy with domestic politics, and gave Congress and the lobbyists more influence in American foreign policy than the Kennedy administration. This strategy played a key role in Johnson's approach to the Middle East, which emphasized keeping the area stable for the postwar petroleum order. The administration's first challenge in the region was not the Arab-Israeli conflict, but the Ba'athist-Nasserist rivalry in North Africa.

The Maghreb Test and Egyptian-American Relations

One of the first challenges that the administration confronted was Nasser's *al-ṭl'ht al-'rabīht* strategy in Maghreb, especially in Algeria. With Egyptian arms and Nasser's political support, Algerian rebels expunged France from their country and won independence in July 1962. A period of political turmoil followed the jubilation, but President Ahmed Ben Bella, a Nasserite, emerged from the conflict as leader of Algeria. Ben Bella championed the Nasser-style Arab socialism in Algeria. Because the Kennedy administration thought that Algeria was the "key to the Maghreb [North Africa[506]]," the White House attempted to use aid to entice Ben Bella away from the Soviet bloc. The Moroccan-Algerian border conflict that broke out in October 1963 due to ill-defined borders, however, complicated this strategy.

Nasser perceived the Moroccan-Algerian border conflict as one more example of his *al-natham al-infsal* theory and began to aid Bella. Nasser first met Ben Bella in May 1963 to strengthen his ties with Algeria and promote unity among the "progressive" revolutionary North African states. Like his Yemen adventure and his pan-Arabism in Syria and Iraq, King Hassan II

[505] Schwarz presents this argument as pertaining to Europe and Vietnam. I extend his argument to the Middle East. See Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, 26-27.
[506] Komer referred to North Africa by its Arabic name the Maghreb; Memorandum from Komer to Kennedy, February 4, 1962, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 21:121.

of Morocco and the West regarded the trip as another example of Nasser expansionism and the road to a Nasserist Arab empire.[507] Nasser, in turn, saw Hassan as another conservative "reactionary" monarch who clung to traditionalism and relied heavily on Western aid to keep his throne. In March 1963, Nasser helped the leftist opposition in Morocco, who were closely linked to Ben Bella's regime in Algeria. The Ba'athists attempted to influence the newly-independent Algeria and described the country as a "liberated country." Hassan attempted to halt what he perceived was his increasing isolation in the Maghreb and Arab world by seeking closer relations with other MENA monarchies—especially the one closest to him in Libya. [508] Cairo, attempted to increase its influence in North Africa and score an ideological point over both the conservative monarchies and Ba'athists through his Maghreb initiative—which was part of the larger *al-ṭl'ht al-'rabīht* vanguard strategy. Scores of tanks, warplanes, and other Egyptian military equipment poured into Algeria as part of this strategy.[509]

Through unity talks, in December 1963 among, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt, Nasser fought to kick-start his vanguard initiative in the Maghreb, but King Hassan II refused to attend, thereby strengthening Nasser's *al-natham al-infsal* or the Order of Separation theory.[510] As a result of Hassan's absence, the negotiations nearly fell apart, and Nasser searched for an issue on which they could all agree. On December 13, he addressed the Tunisian People's Congress with a pompous speech on colonialism and Palestine.[511]

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[507] Nasser and U.S.: Military Exercise," *New York Times*, May 5, 1963.
[508] Office of Current Intelligence Special Report: Morocco under King Hassan, March 22, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[509] Briefing Notes for DCI, UAR, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[510] Ibid.
[511] *Kalmat al-ris Gamal Abdul Nasser fi al-matmr al-shabi fi tunis fi al-ahtfl blgla an ka'at* bizrt [Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser in the People's Congress in Tunis at the ceremony for the evacuation of Bizerte] December 13, 1963*, al-Majmū'ah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.*

Johnson also attempted to attract Ben Bella towards the United States. Like Nasser, Johnson thought Algeria was important to North Africa and Ben Bella was known for anti-Communism—he actually banned the Communist Party in 1962, contending that "we want no parties in Algeria that are run from abroad."[512] LBJ approached Ben Bella the same way his predecessor did, which was to treat the Algerian leader the same way the White House treated Nasser: offering him American aid. Washington attempted to persuade Ben Bella to embrace American Cold War strategy in the Maghreb with PL-480 food assistance.[513] Johnson's main concern was a repeat of Yemen in North Africa which the Kremlin would doubtlessly exploit in order to spread its influence. Algeria represented another ideological battlefield in Cold War. And because the White House considered Algeria as an important ally in the Cold War, the administration struggled to limit the Algerian-Moroccan crisis to the Maghreb.[514]

The Maghreb paradox presented Johnson with a dilemma: by seeking a Maghreb solution to a Maghreb problem, the White House constricted Egyptian influence in the conflict. A second problem for the administration's strategy in the Maghreb was the rivalry between King Hassan II and Ben Bella. Hassan II represented the old order and traditionalism. While Ben Bella's Algeria represented progressivism and modernization in the Maghreb. To abandon Hassan II, however, was tantamount to abandoning 200 hundred years of America-Moroccan relations, and supporting Hassan II equally meant backing out of Kennedy's commitment to attract Arab nationalism.[515] This meddling in Arab politics may have seemed to Nasser that LBJ was working against Egypt, and because Johnson professed his faith in Kennedy's beliefs about Arab

[512] Bi-Weekly Propaganda Guidance, January 28, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[513] National Intelligence Estimate, November 27, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 21: 133-135.
[514] Memorandum from (Mennen) William to Rusk, November 23, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 21:340.
[515] Morocco was one of the first states to recognize the United States in 1777. See Leulla J. Hall, *The United States and Morocco, 1776-1956* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971).

nationalism, the only explanation for the shift in Washington's tactics was invisible influences in the government. Nasser's misperception about Washington's policy and strategy would have huge consequences for both sides.

LBJ and Yemen

In November 1963, LBJ was submerged in a diplomatic crisis in Yemen, not Vietnam. According to U.S. intelligence reports, the situation in Southeast Asia looked hopeful and victory imminent.[516] This mistaken prognosis gave Johnson sufficient respite to concentrate on other issues at home and abroad. It was during this lull that John A. McCone, director of the CIA, presented LBJ with a disturbing report concerning Yemen. McCone told Johnson that Yemen, more than any other problem in the region, had the potential to ignite "the entire Middle East" into a wider conflict involving both superpowers.[517] McCone's diagnosis traced the hostilities in North Africa, the growing tensions in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the complications with the oil companies, the rivalry between the Ba'athists and Nasserists in Syria and Iraq, and the Nasserite political dilemma to Yemen.[518] In McCone's verdict, all roads to Middle Eastern instability led to Yemen.

The Johnson administration wanted to continue Kennedy's congenial diplomacy and nonintervention in Yemen by seeking a peaceful solution to the civil war and an end to hostilities between Faysal and Nasser. Nasser's defiant stance in Yemen, however, complicated Johnson's Yemen strategy and tested the resolve of the White House. It also taxed Johnson's commitment to American-Egyptian relations. Nasser, did not help his case when he began bombarding Saudi

[516] Memorandum, November 23, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:804-806.
[517] Memorandum for the Record, December 2, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:817.
[518] Ibid.

frontier villages. For whatever reason, Nasser had adopted strategies that blocked better relations with the United States.

When Nasser's Presidential Council toiled over the best way to end Egypt's involvement in Yemen, they decided to increase hostilities rather than withdraw militarily.[519] The Council's decision and the logic behind it could be compared to President Richard Nixon's strategy of Vietnamization in 1969. Yemen trapped 30,000 Egyptian troops in an endless guerrilla war. With an estimated cost of $110 million per year, mounting casualties, and cutbacks in social programs, Nasser overextended and nearly bankrupted the country. He had little to show for this effort other than Egyptian soldiers returning home wounded or in body bags.[520] Nasser never faced a situation like Yemen.

The Presidential Council decided that the best way to end the conflict was to expand it by bombing the source of Royalist support—Saudi Arabia.[521] By attacking Faysal and escalating the conflict, Nasser hoped to cripple Saudi Arabian support for the Royalists. This military strategy seemed successful at first, but Nasser's offensive killed non-combatants. This was especially true with the infamous raid on al-Khawba, which caused many Arab civilian deaths and thus badly tarnished Nasser's image among Arab nationalists.[522] The Saudis, pointed to the al-Khawba as an example of Nasser's bellicosity and attempted to persuade Johnson to halt his pro-Nasser strategy.[523]

At the same time that Nasser made his decision to attack al-Khawba, Britain—in hopes of influencing the new administration to aid them in their Southwest Arabia quagmire—revealed to

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[519]Haykal actually presents evidence that the decision was made to bomb Saudi Arabia in December 1962; see Haykal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān*, 650-652.
[520] Central Intelligence Memorandum, "Costs of the Yemen War to Egypt," October 8, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS; Memorandum, "Current Situation and Prospects in Yemen," December 26, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[521] Wajīh Abū Dhikrī, *al-Zuhūr tudfan fī al-yaman*, 68-80. Also see Haykal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān,* 666.
[522] Rusk to Badeau, November 24, 1963, NSF Country File UAR, Box 158, LBJL.
[523] Haykal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān,* 666-667.

the White House that on October 31, Sadat unveiled to Whitehall Egyptian plans to stay in Yemen "for years."[524] Whether Sadat revealed this or not, Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home[525] wished to use the transition after the assassination of Kennedy as a tactic to turn the White House away from what he perceived to be a pro-Nasser policy.

When Whitehall's strategy to induce the new administration to abandon Nasser did not work, British Foreign Secretary Richard Austen Butler urged the White House to use its influence with Nasser to encourage him to permit Royalists to enter a coalition government.[526] Douglas-Home and Butler were more concerned about Aden rather than the civil war in Yemen. Nasser's forces in Yemen, however, encouraged and even aided anti-British rebels across the border in Aden. Rusk, nonetheless, doubted the British solution would work. He told Butler that the United States "was more interested in Saudi Arabia than in the Yemen itself," and thought Douglas-Home and Butler's quixotic idea of coalition government was not an option.

Rusk's response probably baffled Douglas-Home and Butler because the idea of a coalition government was an American proposal, not British one. On November 29, during peace talks in Taiz'z, Yemen's diplomatic capital, American representatives first pushed for a broader coalition government in the YAR as part of a long-term peace deal.[527] The White House's rejection of Whitehall's offer, on December 19, was due to Faysal not making a fuss about the issue.[528] Faysal's solution for Yemen was to get Nasser out and let the Royalists—not the Republicans—decide the government. Johnson's three-point plan for Yemen want to: (1) allow

[524] Telegram from the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State, November 30, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:807-811.
[525] Alec Douglas-Home replaced Harold Macmillan as Prime Minister in October 1963.
[526] Memorandum of Conversation, December 19, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:849-850.
[527] Department of State Telegram, November 29, 1963, NSF, Yemen, Box 161, LBJL.
[528] Memorandum of Conversation, December 19, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963*, Vol. 18:849-850.

the Spinelli Mission[529] to attempt to end the conflict through diplomacy; (2) press Nasser to continue his troop withdrawal; and (3) to warn Cairo to cease all attacks on Saudi Arabia.[530]

Johnson also wanted to avoid a split in U.S.-UAR relations because of Yemen. The White House disagreed with Whitehall on how to approach Nasser's involvement in Yemen and nonchalantly dismissed Douglas-Home's proposal to allow the Royalists into the government. Johnson knew, however, that Yemen had the potential to unravel diplomatic ties between Washington and Cairo, so he sent Badeau to meet with Prime Minister Ali Sabri to discuss Yemen and persuade Nasser to cease his military offensive in Saudi Arabia.[531] Kennedy's "Rules of Engagement," which were already in place, were another alternative to halt Nasser's belligerence into Saudi Arabia. LBJ, however, choose Nasser over the alternative—i.e., the aggressively ultranationalist Ba'athists.

Nasser's rivalry with the Ba'athists, however, made the administration's Nasserite strategy more complex. The problem was that whenever the Ba'athists, who were "more aggressive" than Nasser, did something, Nasser thought he had to be "more aggressive to compete with them."[532] Although Rusk told Butler that Yemen was negligible for the United States, the Ba'athist-Nasserist and the Nasser-Faysal rivalries made the conflict one of the most important issues for the administration. As the Ba'athists attempted to spread their influence into Yemen, Nasser increased his support to the Republicans. Nasser's popularity and prestige among Arab nationalists hinged on his commitment to YAR. If he were to abandon the Republicans when they needed him most, Nasser would lose his leadership role and Nasserists throughout the

[529] In 1963, the United Nation established the United Nations Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM) to find a solution to the civil war. The Secretary-General of the UN U Thant appointed Pier P. Spinelli, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Yemen. More on the Spinelli Mission below.
[530] Memorandum of Conversation, December 19, 1963, *FRUS 1961-1963,* Vol. 18:849-850.
[531] As well as head of the GIA, Sabri served as prime minister from 1962-1965.
[532] Memorandum from Komer to Bundy, December 3, 1963, *FRUS 1962-1963,* Vol. 18:819.

Mideast would reject him as leader of Arab nationalism. Nasser's image and prestige were forever linked to his success in Yemen. And like Nasser's connection to Yemen, American-Egyptian relations were also associated with what happened in Southwest Arabia.

The Johnson administration's attempted to persuade Nasser to commit to his pledge to withdrawal from Yemen while he had the upper hand, but Nasser's problem is when he had the advantage, he stubbornly tightened his grip and persisted until the gain vanished. "Nasser has the bear by the tail and the fool can't let go," Robert Komer explained to McGeorge Bundy, the president's special assistant for national security affairs.[533]

Aware of the importance of Egypt to the postwar order, Johnson wanted to continue the Kennedy strategy of close dialogue and consultation on Mideast issues with Nasser. Under constant pressure from Saudi Arabia, Britain, the oil companies, and the Israeli lobby to cut aid to Egypt, Johnson approached the crisis like Kennedy and decided that severing aid to Nasser was a short-term solution, because this would thrust Nasser into the Soviet's arms. Cutting off aid did not guarantee that Nasser would stop his campaign against Saudi frontier villages.

After Johnson settled into the White House, he sent Nasser an oral message to affirm his intention to continue Kennedy's approach to maintain good relations between Washington and Cairo. Johnson told Nasser, however, that Yemen was a "serious challenge" to the stability of region and he wished to work with Nasser to engage the threat.[534] Johnson continued to press Nasser to end hostilities in Yemen along the three points agreed with Butler in early December.[535] Because Yemen endangered the postwar petroleum order and tested the strength of

[533] Memorandum from Komer to Bundy, December 3, 1963, *FRUS 1962-1963,* Vol. 18:819.
[534] Oral Message from Johnson to Nasser, December 23, 1963, NSF UAR Correspondence File, Box 55, LBJL.
[535] Ibid.

American-Egyptian ties in the early days of Johnson's presidency, the White House spent a good portion of its time on finding a solution to the conflict.

Johnson, Nasser, and the Spinelli UNYOM Mission

In the aftermath of Bunker's failed attempt, the UN Security Council passed on June 11, 1963 Resolution 179, which established UNYOM as part of a disengagement plan.[536] The UNYOM mission was led by Carl von Horn, a Swedish general experienced in Middle East peacekeeping. Von Horn's perception of Nasser undermined his peacekeeping efforts in Yemen. In his memoir, Von Horn accuses Nasser of intransigence, which the Swede believed prolonged the conflict.[537]

One of the problems was Resolution 179 itself. It called on both the UAR and Saudi Arabia to fund UNYOM mission. This compromised the whole effort from the outset for Saudi Arabia provided most of the funds for the UNYOM mission while Nasser lacked the financing to back the UN mission. The Egyptians believed that Faysal held the advantage and used his financial power to manipulate Von Horn to aid Saudi Arabia and the Royalists. Nasser, therefore, rejected Von Horn's insistence that he contact the Royalists first as part of the disengagement plan. As the peace efforts became more complicated, Von Horn decided to resign his commission on August 20.[538]

The Italian diplomat Pier P. Spinelli was appointed Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Yemen and replaced Von Horn as commander of UNYOM. Spinelli attempted to open extensive negotiations between the belligerents. Under the terms of

[536] Official Records of the Security Council, Eighteenth Year, June 1963, Document S/5331, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/200/52/IMG/NR020052.pdf?OpenElement, accessed May 20, 2013.
[537] Carl von Horn, *Soldiering for Peace* (New York: David McKay, 1967), 298-315.
[538] Jones, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War 1962-1965*, 70.

the original peace plan, Saudi Arabia was to cease all support for the Royalists and ban the counterrevolutionary forces from using its territory to launch raids on the YAR while Egypt would suspend its activity in the YAR and withdraw its troops. The Kennedy administration's struggle to use its influence with Faysal and Nasser to implement the UNYOM failed. Johnson, however, thought Spinelli's negotiations were the best effort—short of full American involvement—for peace.

Spinelli, who was UN Special envoy to Jordan from 1958 to 1962, enjoyed a special relationship with King Hussein and seemed biased towards the conservative regimes. Spinelli blamed "Nasser's propaganda" for the heightened tensions.[539] A career UN diplomat, Spinelli attempted to establish talks between the chief belligerents—Faysal and Nasser—as a first step to stability and peace in the Arabian Peninsula. During his presidency, Kennedy encouraged Nasser and Faysal to meet to solve the Yemen puzzle. Johnson, however, placed much faith in the Spinelli mission. Nasser on the other hand saw Spinelli as puppet of Faysal, Hussein, and Order of Separation. This image of Spinelli was unfounded, though, because Spinelli in a meeting with Badeau on December 13 actually sounded more pro-UAR than pro-Saudi when he told Badeau that the UAR attack on Saudi Arabian villages was in fact a navigation error.[540] But Nasser perceived otherwise and thought that Spinelli favored the Saudis in Yemen. Nasser's mistrust of Spinelli gave him grounds to believe that Johnson was out to get him.[541]

Spinelli arrived in Cairo on December 13 to continue UNYOM's mission to find a solution to Yemen. The next day he updated Badeau on the progress of his peace effort. "UAR

[539] Department of State Telegram, November 25, 1963, NSF Yemen, Box 161, LBJL.
[540] Badeau to Rusk, December 17, 1963, NSF, UAR File, Box 158, LBJL.
[541] Haykal actually states that Kennedy sincerely tried to find a solution to Yemen, but Nasser felt Johnson worked against him from the beginning; see Haykal, *Sanawāt al-Ghalayān,* 647-648.See also Haykal, *the Cairo Documents*, 225-226. For Nasser's suspicions of Spinelli and LBJ's response see Department of State Telegram, November 24, 1963, NSF, Yemen, Box 161, LBJL.

troop withdrawals [are] proceeding apace," he told Badeau, confirming that Nasser was keeping to his promise. Nasser, Spinelli predicted, should have his troop level to 20,000 by January 4.[542] Spinelli recommended that the White House put pressure on both sides to end their operations in Yemen.[543] Meanwhile in Yemen, the war continued to spill over into Saudi Arabia and Aden. On December 27 in Aden, George Henderson, the assistant to the British High Commissioner of Aden, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, , died of injuries he sustained from a terrorist bombing targeting Trevaskis's motorcade at Aden's airport on December 10. The bombing occurred when Henderson was leaving for London. A terrorist threw a bomb at Aden airport. The British blamed Nasser and relations between Cairo and Washington deteriorated as a result of Yemen.

On December 26, Badeau warned the White House that Nasser believed the new administration had digressed from Kennedy's "cool but correct policy" towards Egypt due to the Washington's stance on Yemen.[544] Badeau recommended "that [a] correspondence between President Johnson and Nasser be inaugurated" along the lines of the Kennedy-Nasser correspondence with the intent to assure Nasser that LBJ wished to "carry out [the] policies of [the] previous administration." Badeau also recommended that LBJ emphasize that the:

> US plays no favorites and has no 'chosen instruments' in the Near East. We endeavor [to] pursue [a] policy of nonalignment in disputes among Arab states so long as such disputes do no not endanger US material interests in [the] area. We would welcome improvement in relations between [the] UAR and Saudi Arabia. US aim in Yemen is to see established there a broadly representative Government which will threaten no one but concentrated on urgent problem of Yemen's internal development. We recognize there [are] differences of opinion between the US and UAR.[545]

[542] Badeau to Rusk, December 17, 1963, NSF, UAR File, Box 158, LBJL.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Badeau to Talbot, December 26, 1963, NSF, Nasser Correspondence, Box 55, LBJL
[545] Ibid.

Badeau suggested that LBJ follow the path that Kennedy paved by assuring Nasser in writing that Johnson would follow Kennedy's approach. Johnson chose to ignore Badeau's warning and instead relied on the oral message he sent on December 23. It was not until February 27, 1964 that Johnson finally wrote to Nasser. Nasser held Kennedy's correspondence in high regard and he "prized their sincerity and frankness."[546] It can be assumed from Badeau's assessment that Kennedy's letters to Nasser illustrated to the Egyptians Kennedy's genuine concern for Egypt.

By the end of December, the situation became dire for Nasser as the fight among the Nasserists, Ba'athists, and conservatives heated up. Overall, however, 1963 was good for Nasser because he added Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, and Yemen to his list of allies. But Nasser's enemies in the region outnumbered him and could outspend his allies. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Aden, and the oil producing Arab Gulf states still opposed him and they had the financial resources to defeat him. In addition, the Syrian Ba'athists continued to oppose the Nasserists throughout the Mideast and North Africa. To top all his troubles, Nasser had to deal with a nuclear-armed Israel, the British presence in Aden, and a new administration in the White House. Moreover, the passage of the Gruening Amendment, the Israeli lobby, and the assassination of Kennedy caused Nasser to believe that an invisible government was controlling the American government. Once again, perceptions played an important role in U.S.-Egyptian relations.

By December 23, Egyptian troops were locked in a low intensity campaign against the Royalist forces. Amir, who was in Yemen directing the Egyptian offensive against the counterrevolutionaries, could not penetrate into mountain strongholds of the Royalists, and the fighting capacity of the Royalists remained strong in those areas. Sallal's government continued to rely on Nasser's military aid and financing to stay in power. And although he resented

[546] Ibid.

Egyptian interference in YAR affairs, he avoided antagonizing Amir in order to keep Nasser on his side. Nasser wanted to reduce the Egyptian troop levels in Yemen because it was costing him dearly in both men and resources, but withdrawal before victory would cost him leadership of the Arab nationalists. [547]

Nasser needed a way out of the Yemen morass and Israel provided the opportunity he needed in late 1963. By focusing Arab attention on Israel instead of Yemen, he could end the intra-Arab conflict in Southwestern Arabia and plug the Yemeni financial drain on his resources. On the anniversary commemorating the Suez War on December 23, Nasser told the gathered crowd in Port Suez that Egypt was surrounded by enemies, but he would try to reconcile things with Saudi Arabia and attempt to find common ground with the Ba'athists.[548] In Nasser's words, "I want a meeting with the Arab monarchs and presidents . . . as soon as possible" to discuss "the battle of Palestine and Jordan, which is part of the battle of Palestine."[549] For Nasser, an Arab Chief of State Conference in Cairo to discuss unified action against Israel was the best possible solution for one of his security dilemmas, Yemen.

The end of the Yemeni conflict would give Nasser the time he needed to concentrate on another security problem, Israel. With its targeted assassinations of Egyptian scientists, its covert Mossad operations in Cairo and other Arab capitals, is nuclear program, and its attempts to divert the Jordan River waters, Israel provided the tinder Nasser needed to fuel his pan-Arab nationalism while at the same time the Arab summit could provide him the time he needed to meet the Israeli security challenge to Egypt. In December 1963, the Arab world placed their

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[547] Central Intelligence Memorandum, "Current Situation and Prospects in Yemen," December 26, 1963, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[548] Speech by President Gamal Abdul Nasser on the Seventh Anniversary in Port Said, December 23, 1963, *Kalmat al-ris Gamal Abdul Nasser fi al-matmr al-shabi fi bort said* [Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at Port Said] *al-Majmū'ah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir vol. 5Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah*.
[549] Ibid.

differences aside and agreed that Israel was the bigger threat to their security than the civil war in Yemen.

The Syrian Ba'athists, however, attempted to take advantage of Arab fervor for unity when they tried to use their influence among the Palestinian national movement to escalate the conflict with Israel. Nasser wanted to avoid this. In Cairo, Nasser attempted to persuade the Arab leaders to agree to a United Arab Command (UAC) led by Egypt that would coordinate the Arab response to Israel. The UAC would give him the power he needed to restrain the belligerents in Syria while at the same time win him the prestige he needed among the Arab nationalist who called for action on the Palestinian front. He further tried to isolate the Syrian Ba'athists by arguing that there would be no overt attack against Israel. The best way to undermine Israel, Nasser argued, was through guerilla-style border raids. At Cairo, Nasser attempted to get the Arab leaders to agree to recruit, train, and conduct covert "infiltration" attacks against Israel.[550] These "Sabotage operations" into Israel were to be funded and financed by the Arab states that bordered Israel and recruitment for such operation was to begin early in January 1964. But the Syrian Ba'athists saw a window in Nasser's compromise to seize the Palestinian issue and use it to unite their party. King Husayn, rightfully, saw Nasser's plan as dangerous to his regime for a Palestinian liberation group threatened to stir the Palestinians in Jordan and could lead to unrest in Jordan. In addition, raids from Jordan could cause Israeli reprisal raids against his kingdom. In other words, Nasser's solution to his security dilemma could result in a security problem for King Husayn.

[550] Badeau to Department of State, December 16, 1963, NSF, UAR File, Box 158, LBJL. Somehow the United States found out about Nasser's plans from a secret source in Egypt.

Conclusion

Nasser sought to end his quarrel with the Syrian Ba'athists and conservative Arab regimes and declare victory in Yemen through the façade of Arab liberation of Palestine, which he intended to control by maintaining a low-key guerilla war that would not antagonize Israel to the point of starting a regional war. Indeed, Heikal assured a worried Badeau that Nasser did not intend to go to war with Israel, but would undertake "positive" action to encourage the Israelis to end their military and political operations in the Middle East.[551] Nasser used his diplomatic skills in an attempt to end the war in Yemen and to end the Arab cold war by concentrating on Israel. Nasser, however, discovered that some Arab states were not so easily controlled. The politics behind the conference of 1964, therefore, became an important matter for the Arabs as Nasser struggled to use the summit to solve his growing security problem and other Arab states such as the Syrian Ba'athists attempted to use it to solve their own security dilemmas.

Unaware of the potential trouble the Arab summit would cause for Israel and the United States, President Johnson retired to the Texas White House (the Johnson Ranch) near Stonewall for a weekend break on December 27. Johnson wanted to know more about Yemen and the likelihood it would lead to a regional war. That Friday, McCone briefed the President on Yemen and its tribal history. McCone also pointed out that Whitehall resented American leniency towards Nasser and that this issue had the potential to split the Anglo-American alliance.[552] He also told LBJ that the war had the probability to threat Western oil supplies. "What should be done," Johnson asked. McCone knew that Nasser must somehow be persuaded to withdrawal from Yemen. He cynically told Johnson that the January 4 deadline to withdraw Egyptian troops should be extended "in the hopes that with the passage of time the Yemen resentment to UAR

[551] Badeau to the Department of State, December 31, 1963, NSF, UAR File, Box 158, LBJL.
[552] Memorandum for the Record, December 27, 1963, *FRUS 1962-1963*, Vol. 18:858-859.

occupation would increase to the point where the UAR would be forced to withdraw…and the threat to Faisal would thus be relieved."[553] And like his predecessor, Johnson found himself pulled into the Yemeni black hole and the Mideast quagmire.

[553] Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

PALESTINE, HYDROPOLITICS, AND AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

We Palestinians see in you the expression of our own aspirations; so please do not fail us.
-Palestinian activist to Gamal Abdul Nasser

It seemed that all of Cairo was in a festive mood in January 1964. The city's public buildings were illuminated by streams of light and the flags of all the Arab states dangled from the buildings surrounding Cairo's major throughways. As throngs of Arab leaders and dignitaries arrived at Cairo's international airport, they probably noticed the brilliance of *um al-dunya*,[554] as public fountains that were once in disrepair were replaced and the conspicuous gleam of bronze lions at *Qasr al-Nil* Bridge greeted them as they made their way into the city.[555] Nasser spared little expense in transforming his metropolis into what he envisioned to be the headquarters of Arab nationalism and the political capital of the Arab world. Amid this celebratory atmosphere, Arab leaders from across MENA gathered in Cairo to discuss the one subject they could all agree on: the destruction of Israel.

As part of his plans to transform Egypt into a regional superpower, Nasser attempted to make Cairo the epicenter of pan-Arab nationalism, African unity, and nonalignment. In 1964, Nasser attempted to bring his designs for Egypt one step closer by assembling Arab, African, and nonaligned states in Cairo to debate pan-Arab unity, pan-African political and economic cooperation, and nonalignment, respectfully. The most important of these conferences was the Arab Chiefs Summit of January 1964.

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[554] "Mother of the world" is another name Egyptians use for Cairo.
[555] State Department, "Telegram on Arab Summit Conference," January 13, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.

Nasser convened the Arab Chiefs Summit as a strategic move designed to splinter the conservative bloc aligned against him in Yemen while also halting the momentum from the Syrian Ba'athists on the Arab-Israeli front. Yemen had plagued Nasser since the civil war began in 1962. He devoted much of his energies and resources to sustain the Nasserite regime in Sana'a against the conservative alliance, which was compromised of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Britain, and Israel. Convinced that the survival of Nasserism hinged on events in Southwest Arabia, Nasser was determined to ensure the survival of the YAR at all costs. For him, this was a vital strategic interest.

Adding to Nasser's Yemen problem was the Arab-Israel conflict. Although he was resolved to keep it in the ice box, events in 1964 prevented him from doing so. That year Israel's water diversion plans for the Jordan River neared completion, leading Arab progressives and conservatives alike to look to Nasser to show leadership on the issue. The Syrian Ba'athists used the Israel's water strategy to rejuvenate and unite their party. They resurrected the Palestinian cause as cover to attack Israel and restore unity among the party's various Middle East branches. In the process, Ba'athists organized and developed a Palestinian plan to liberate Palestine. This decision broke open the floodgates on the Arab-Israeli front and threaten to heat up the American-Egyptian ice box strategy. As Nasser groped for answers to Yemen and the Jordan River waters problem, he decided that gathering of Arab heads of state in Cairo would be the best route to take.

This chapter examines the politics behind the Arab Chiefs summit and Nasser's motives in convoking a conference intended to split his opposition and unite the Arab world behind him. I argue that Nasser attempted this in early 1964 as part of a two-fold strategy: to first split the conservative-Israeli alliance in Yemen in an attempt to end the conflict there; and then to

simultaneously attempt to regain control of the Palestinian national movement after the Ba'athists had implemented their own blueprint for Palestinian liberation. I contend that Nasser believed that by splitting the conservatives, he would gain the upper hand in Yemen and force Faysal into peace negotiations on Egypt's terms, thereby giving Nasser and his allies in the YAR the strategic advantage in Southwestern Arabia. At the same time, Nasser hoped to regain control of the Palestinian cause, I also argue that Nasser hoped to deliver the final blow to the Syrian Ba'athists by taking away their last effort to unite with other Ba'athists throughout the Arab world.

Finally, I maintain that despite evidence to the contrary, the Johnson administration falsely believed that Washington and American economic aid played a role in pacifying Nasser's anti-Israeli and anti-West rhetoric at the conference. The White House, therefore, mistakenly believed that American aid could influence Nasser's politics along the lines of America's Cold War goals. This view convinced Johnson's advisors that Nasser needed American aid more than America needed Nasser, which caused Johnson to press Nasser on matters important to Egypt's national security. This move, in turn, caused a breakdown in American-Egyptian relations in 1965 and the resulting ripple continued until the June War of 1967.[556]

[556] Ferris argues that Nasser used the Arab Chiefs Summit as a "*mise-en-scène*" to get Faysal to the negotiating table in *Nasser's Gamble*, 215. His argument closely reflects that of others such, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Nasser's Chief of Military Intelligence during the Yemeni conflict. See Al-Ḥadīdī, S*hāhid 'alá ḥarb al-Yaman* (al-Qāhirah : Maktabat Madbūlī, 1984). Ferris, however, ignores the fact that wherever Nasser went throughout the Arab world in 1963, his speeches were usually interrupted by the crowd chanting "Palestine, Palestine." Nasser, therefore, seeing where the tide was turning took the initiative and called for an Arab Chiefs summit in 1964. Avraham Sela on the other hand states that Nasser really wanted to reassert his leadership in the Arab world and therefore control the Ba'athists regime in Syria from starting a war with Israel that he was not ready for; see Avraham Sela, *Unity within Conflict in the Inter-Arab System: the Arab Summit Conferences 1964-1982* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press 1982), 26-28 (Hebrew). Dekmejian credits the invention of the PLO with the main cause of the war, but does not mention the Arab Chiefs Summits of 1964. See also Dekemejian, *Egypt Under Nasir*, 241.

Reinventing Palestine

On October 23, 1963, the Sixth National Ba'ath Congress met in Damascus to attempt to redefine the Ba'ath party. Syrian Ba'athists leaders needed a cause to unite the various branches of the party that dotted the Arab world. Most concerning, however, was unity with the Iraqi Ba'athists. It was a period of uncertainty and division for the party and it suffered a "crisis of party" and a "crisis of government."[557] They found their unifying objective in the Palestinian struggle. The Ba'athists planned to form a Palestinian organization or entity supported by the Syrian Ba'athist regime that would carry on the fight against Israel by using guerrilla warfare. By attacking Israel and resurrecting Palestine, the Ba'athists hoped they could revitalize the party

Realizing their military weakness relative to Israel's, the Syrian Ba'athists concluded that an indirect or asymmetric fight with Tel Aviv would bring them the victory that had evaded the Arab world since 1948 and along with it the prestige they needed to unite Ba'athists across the region. The Ba'athists proposal was no mere coincidence. The successful Algerian revolution in 1962 against France proved that a guerrilla force could defeat a modern military force.[558] The Ba'athists, therefore, devised an organization similar to the Algerian Liberation Front (ALF).[559] According to the plan, the front for the liberation of Palestine was to consist of all the Palestinian national movements and represent all the Palestinian people, including the refugees.[560]

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[557] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity 1959-1974*, 63; for a comprehensive look at Palestinian national movement in the 1960s see Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (

[558] ALF led a successful guerrilla-style insurgence against France from 1954 to 1962. Although, France won militarily in Algeria, the ALF won politically leading to Algerian independence in 1962.For the connection between Palestinian liberation and Algerian liberation, see Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity, 1959-1974,* 17. For the Franco-Algerian conflict, see Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[559] Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity 1959-1974,* 17.

[560] Ibid., 17-18.

After the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948, succeeding Arab governments maintained an unwritten agreement among themselves that the *Naksa* (setback) of 1948, which created the state of Israel, had to be reversed. To Arabs, Israel was a Zionist state founded by European colonialists and therefore an "illegitimate state" that was seen as an extension of European imperialism that began in the 1880s with its "racial exclusiveness and self-segregation."[561] The concept of a Jewish state in Palestine was alien to the Arabs, and they questioned how "an alien state [Israel] was to be planted in the land link between Asia and Africa without the free consent" of the inhabitants.[562]

All Arabs—conservative and progressive alike—tacitly agreed that the liberation of Palestine after the *Naksa* was to be led by the Arab states, with Palestinians playing only a supporting role. When the Syrian Ba'athists declared that Palestinians working through the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) would "liberate" Palestine with the Arab states playing a secondary role by supplying the PLF with material support, the Ba'athists had in fact broken away from Arab world's verbal agreement concerning the liberation of Palestinian, which stated that the Arab states would play the primary role in liberating Palestine.[563]

On another level, the Ba'athists' decision was a direct affront to Nasser's claim as champion of the Palestinian cause. Ever since the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, Nasser had felt a special attachment to Palestine. During the conflict, his army unit was surrounded near the Palestinian village of al-Fallujah and held out despite suffering heavy bombardment from Israeli forces and attacks until the armistice was signed. It was Fallujah where Nasser met Amir and where he began his famous *Philosophy of a Revolution*—Nasser's ideas on Arab unity and

[561] Dr. Fayez A. Sayegh, Zionist *Colonialism in Palestine*, the Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center (Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1965), 19 [hereafter PLORC].
[562] Ibid, 17.
[563] Shemesh, *Arab Politics, Palestinian Nationalism and the Six Day War*, 25-26.

Egypt's role in it. For these reasons, Palestine held a special status for Nasser. In 1964, however, Nasser wanted to avoid a fight with Israel, but the Syrian Ba'athists, needed a remedy to revitalize the party.

Nasser needed to retake the initiative by challenging the Ba'athists assault or he risked losing the Palestinian cause, a cause he often used to justify his revolutionary policies in Egypt, to the Ba'athists. This in turn caused him to allocate needed revenue from Egypt for his foreign adventures all the while maintaining austere economic conditions at home. As Nasser's political objectives in Yemen took on a Palestinian dimension, Nasser found himself drawn back into the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinian question, always popular with the Arab masses, was an issue Nasser wished to avoid, but could not—at least not in 1964. With his best troops trapped in the Yemeni morass, the last thing Nasser needed was another Arab-Israeli war or a repeat of the 1956 Suez War. Another Israeli victory on the battlefield risked the end of his regime. Nasser needed the ice box as much as Johnson. Between 1958 and 1964, Nasser kept the Arab-Israeli conflict dormant by suppressing *fedayeen* raids from Gaza and attempted to avoid references to Israel in his speeches. This had worked in the short-run, but Syrian Ba'athist machinations and the near completion of Israel's Jordan River diversion plan resurrected the conflict.

As Nasser toured the Arab world to advance Nasserism, he noticed the Arab masses were restless and full of rage not for Arab unity, but for Palestinian liberation. They were vehemently anti-Israel and demanded action on the Palestinian front. For instance, when Nasser visited Tunis in December 1963 to promote Egyptian solidarity and Arab unity with Tunis, the crowd interrupted his speech with chants of "Palestine, Palestine," reminding Nasser that Palestine was relevant even in Arab Maghreb. In response, Nasser skillfully altered his speech to equate Arab unity with Palestinian liberation: "Today, I hear you brothers proclaim Palestine and I feel this

same feeling across the Arab world!" Nasser told the crowd. "Palestine summons us to strengthen our [collective] self-esteem, and Palestine summons us to defend our Arab nationalism, and Palestine summons us to purge the remnants of colonialism that has split us into different nation-states, and Palestine summons us to defend Arab nationalism and it summons us to Arab unity. Arab unity that is the will of all Arabs who were forcibly divided by colonialism."[564] In another case during his annual Port Said "Suez Victory" speech on December 23, 1963 at Port Said, Nasser began by emphasizing the accomplishments of the Free Officers' Revolution and Egypt's fight against colonialism, but similar to Tunis, the crowd chanted "Palestine, Palestine!"[565]

Nasser experienced first-hand the change in attitudes throughout the Arab world. From Morocco to the Persian Gulf, Arabs demanded action and there was a real danger that the Ba'athists would take advantage of Nasser's predicament to start another war. During his speeches, Nasser attempted to answer his critics and assuage the crowds by warning them that the disaster of 1948 cannot be repeated a second time and it that it would take time to build the momentum they needed to defeat Israel.[566] He reminded the crowds that every step he made was a step for Palestinian liberation. Nasser, therefore, adroitly justified his domestic and intra-Arab policies as part of his plans to liberate Palestine from Zionism. Nasser decided he needed to regain control of the situation before the Syrians seized the Palestinian cause, which he had claimed to champion. Moreover, if the Syrian Ba'athists agitated Israel to the extent that

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[564] Kalmat al-ris Gamal Abdul Nasser *fi al-matmr al-shabi fi tunis fi al-ahtfl blgla an ka'at bizrt* [Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser in the People's Congress in Tunis at the ceremony fo the evacuation of Bizerte] December 13, 1963, *al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah,* vol. 4*:* 489.

[565] Kalmat al-ris Gamal Abdul Nasser fi eid al-nasr al-saba fi bort said matmr al-shabi fi tunis fi al-ahtfl blgla an ka'at bizrt [Speech by President Gamal Abdul Nasser on the Seventh Anniversary in Port Said, December 23, 1963] *al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah* vol. 4:492.

[566] Ibid.

Jerusalem retaliated against Gaza things could spiraled into another unwanted Arab-Israeli war. Ahmed ben Aboud, Morocco's ambassador to the United States, succulently described Nasser's dilemma when he stated that Syria "wants a fight" and their motivation is "to put Nasser on the spot."[567] As Nasser searched for an answer to the PLF question, he eventually found it in an Arab conference where he intended to announce his own Palestinian liberation organization to rival the PLF. Convening a summit of Arab leaders, however, would give Nasser the raison d' être for another Palestinian liberation organization and a chance to sideline the Ba'athist-PLF initiative. Once Arab leaders were gathered in Cairo, he would try to persuade them to back his Palestinian project while he isolated the Syrian Ba'athists' plan. Nasserites throughout the Arab world echoed the Egyptian premier call for a summit and the Nasserite press promoted his plan as a "unified patriotic effort" to defeat Israel.[568]

Ahmed Shuqayri Enters the Palestinian Fray

If Nasser had hoped to use the Palestinian cause to help him in Yemen, Ahmed Shuqayri leader and representative of the Palestinians in the Arab League had his own plans. Before the Cairo Summit, Shuqayri toured MENA to promote a more militant stance towards Israel. His agenda called for the creation a Palestinian liberation group that reflected the Ba'athists' plan.[569] His Palestinian entity would encompass the various Palestinian groups under the umbrella of a Palestinian organization that would spearhead the Palestinian revolution and become the vanguard of Palestinian freedom.

[567] Department of State Telegram, "Cairo Summit," January 12, 1964, RG 59, POL 7, Box 2761, NARA.
[568] Department of State Telegram, Jordan Diversion, January 1, 1964 RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[569] Shuqayri had actually proposed this before Ba'athists in 1959, but the idea was unpopular among the Arab states and failed to materialize.

In December 1963, he traveled to Libya for its twelfth independence anniversary. While there Shuqayri met with Libyan political leaders and gave a number of speeches promoting the Palestinian cause. Known for his Nasser-like speeches, Shuqayri gave the Libyan masses what they wanted--a diatribe on Zionism's purported stranglehold on American politics. Shuqayri also met with King Idris, who although reluctant to go to the Cairo summit, was nonetheless persuaded by Shuqayri and other Libyan politicians to attend. Similar meetings between Shuqayri and Arab leaders took place throughout MENA. His message was the same: the Palestinians needed an organization or front to take the fight to the Zionists.[570]

Egyptians have always had a passionate attachment to the idea of a Palestinian state, and thus to show solidarity for this notion, Nasser granted Gaza a constitution, which gave Palestinians semi-autonomy and defined the future of that state.[571] But Nasser also used the Palestinian cause for his pan-Arab goals. Because Shuqayri owed his post as representative of Palestine in the Arab League to Nasser, Nasser perhaps reasoned that by supporting Shuqayri's idea and Palestinian rights, he could ultimately gain control of the proposed Palestinian organization. Nasser, therefore, shrewdly embraced the Shuqayri plan for a Palestinian front and even supported his call for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Palestine, Yemen, Hydropolitics Politics and American-Egyptian Relations

Due to Egyptians', Nasser's passionate attachment to the Palestinian problem, caused him yet another political dilemma in 1964. Many Egyptians and Arabs demanded action on the Palestinian front, and although they did, any tangible effort along these lines could lead to another unwanted war with Israel. If, however, he did not act on behalf of the cause, he risked

[570] Department of State Airgram, Visit of Ahmad Shuqayri to Tripoli, January 11, 1964, RG 59, POL 7, Box 2761, NARA.
[571] Ibid., 3.

losing his title as champion of the Palestinian cause to his enemies as well as losing a key issue he used to justify his pan-Arab politics to Egyptians. Escaping this dilemma would not be easy.

On another front, the year 1964 was also crucial year for American-Egyptian relations. A number of issues, such as Nasser's support for revolutionary groups in Southwest Arabia, disagreement in the Congo, Nasser's support for Palestinian revolutionary groups, American arms to Israel, and Western base rights in Libya, Aden, and Saudi Arabia were among other problems that arose to challenge American-Egyptian relations that year.[572] All of these topics were potentially contentious and could strain relations between Cairo and Washington. Navigating this diplomatic minefield would require all the diplomatic skills the two sides could muster.

When Johnson first entered the White House, Nasser's Mideast troubles in Yemen and the Arab world were at their zenith. Nasser knew that Johnson had been an outspoken critic of his regime since his days in Congress. After the Suez Crisis, when Eisenhower used American economic diplomacy to force Britain, France, and Israel to withdraw from the Sinai and Suez Canal Zone in 1956, Johnson openly criticized Eisenhower in Congress for exchanging America's traditional allies for an anti-American one. [573] Nasser, therefore, sought assurances from the new administration that it would continue the Eisenhower-Kennedy approach towards Egypt.[574]

Johnson attempted to assuage Nasser and the other Arab heads of state by telling them that he intended to continue the Kennedy approach to the Middle East. But Nasser and many of

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[572] Other issues such as as the burning of the U.S. Information Agency Library in Cairo and the downing of an American civilian aircraft over Egyptian airspace took place in 1964.
[573] Douglas Little, "A Fool's Errand: America and the Middle East 1961-1969," in Diane Kunz, ed., *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations during the 1960s* (Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 283-319.See also Little, *American Orientalism*, 31.
[574] State Department, Telegram on Badeau-Nasser Meeting, January 7, 1964, RG 59, POL 1 UAR-US, Box 2766, NARA.

his Nasserite allies in the region remained unconvinced. In an oral message delivered by Ambassador Badeau to Nasser, Johnson vowed to continue Kennedy's cordial relationship with Egypt. Yet as Nasser's troubles mounted, his Mideast politics took on an anti-American aura. In response, Nasser's critics in the United States lobbied the White House to sever diplomatic ties with Egypt.[575] Domestic politics thus played a role in Johnson's calculations.

The problem that most strained relations between Egypt and the United States was Nasser's involvement in what Badeau termed "third country relations," by which he meant Yemen.[576] Because the civil war in Yemen placed a strain on Egyptian manpower and resources and was unpopular with the Egyptian masses, Nasser needed an exit strategy that would allow him to leave Yemen with dignity—a "peace with honor" or a "peace of the brave."[577] Although Yemen had not gained Nasser the prestige among the Arab nationalists that he had hoped for, Nasser had invested too much in Southwestern Arabia to withdraw prematurely. Nasser risked losing a key Nasserite ally state and his standing as leader of Arab nationalism if he withdrew too soon. Furthermore, withdrawal would mean a victory for the Ba'athists and conservatives. The domestic ramifications of such a pullout were unfathomable for Nasser. Once again, Nasser was in a difficult position with no easy way out.

On the American-Egyptian front, Badeau feared that excessive American pressure on Nasser to leave Yemen would cause a rift between Cairo and Washington over a country in which the United States had no strategic interest.[578] Forcing Nasser out of Yemen could cause

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[575] The various anti-Nasser lobby groups that existed in the 1960s are beyond the scope of this research. Interestingly, in addition to the pro-Israel anti-Nasser groups was the Society for the Prevention of World War III, which consistently urged the White House since the late 1950s to break relations with Nasser.
[576] Badeau to Johnson, January 3, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[577] Nasser's search for a way out of Yemen can be compared with America's search for an exit from Vietnam. When one was reached between the United States and Vietnam on January 23, 1973 President Richard Nixon described it as "peace with honor". Conrad Black compares Nixon's "peace with honor" to de Gaulle's "peace of the brave." See Conrad Black, *Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 516.
[578] State Department Telegram, Jordan Diversion, January 1, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.

the collapse of his regime and lead to a cascade effect that would disrupt the postwar petroleum order. Not wanting the new administration to appear as if it were departing from Kennedy's Egypt strategy, Badeau suggested that Johnson not press Nasser too much on the Yemen situation. Moreover, he advised LBJ not to blame Nasser alone for the conflict in Yemen, and stressed that Saudi Arabia also shared responsibility for the escalation and that Faysal's continued assistance to the Imam Badr "prolong[ed] the struggle." He added that Yemen was an unstable tribal society with an ineffective government, thus it was better to have Nasser there than to have "chaos or replacement of Egyptians by the Soviets."[579]

In Badeau's estimation, America's mission in Southwest Arabia was to keep Saudi Arabia secure from attacks and to maintain the British presence in Aden.[580] He added that the Soviet position had declined in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis and Nasser, although he received arms and economic aid from the Soviet Union, continued to "avoid becoming an economic satellite of the Soviets."[581] As for Israel, Badeau explained that it was in the UAR's benefit to keep the conflict in the "ice box" and that Nasser wished for "containment rather than attack" Israel. Badeau advised that through the process of quiet diplomacy, a gradual peace could be achieved in the region on that front. He warned LBJ of those in Washington who wanted to impose a pro-Israel "Western solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which would only escalate the conflict, not end it.[582] Others in the administration, such as Secretary of State Dean Rusk, urged LBJ to listen to Badeau's advice and maintain the Kennedy approach towards Nasser.[583]

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[579] Ibid.
[580] Ibid.
[581] Badeau to Johnson, January 3, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, Folder 8, LBJL.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Memorandum for the President, January 14, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, Folder 8, LBJL.
[583] Ibid.

Robert Komer also agreed with this assessment and told the president it was judicious to continue to pursue the Kennedy strategy towards Egypt.[584]

When White House policymakers first learned of Nasser's plans for a Cairo summit, they feared that the fallout of such a meeting would mean trouble on the Arab-Israeli front and harm Egyptian-American relations. Nasser's confidant and editor of the Egyptian daily, *Al-Ahram*, Mohammad H. Heikal, first hinted to American embassy officials in December 1963 of Nasser's intention to make a "momentous departure" from his current course by inviting all Arab leaders to Cairo to debate Israel's diversionary plans of the Jordan River.[585] Heikal admitted to American officials that the reasoning behind Nasser's decision was based on his conclusion that he needed to isolate the Syrian Ba'athists by drawing closer to the conservative regimes.[586]

The Arab Summit of 1964, therefore, became a testing ground for Egyptian-American relations. "My guess is that we are in the opening stages of another of those mercurial turnabouts in the Arab world," Robert Komer complained to McGeorge Bundy, Johnson's national security adviser, on January 2. "Under the magic rubric of uniting against Israel, the contesting Arab leaders will paper over their own differences beginning at the Cairo summit."[587] Administration officials considered 1964 a critical year for the U.S.-UAR relations, and many within the administration hoped to somehow maintain the relationship during an election year. Komer later told Egyptian officials that "if we could only get through 1964 without a real setback in U.S. relations with the Arabs, I felt sure that the obvious uptrend of the last few years would be continued and strengthened.[588] Komer also advised Johnson that "if we get through '64 with

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[584] Ibid.
[585] State Department, "Telegram from Cairo to the State Department," December 31, 1963, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[586] Ibid.
[587] Komer to Bundy, January 2, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[588] Memorandum for the Record, January 3, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1967*, Vol. 18:6-7.

Nasser in fact having restrained Arabs over [the] Jordan Water (however much noise he makes) it will amply justify our whole Nasser policy."[589]

As Arab leaders arrived in Cairo, American Administration officials carefully watched as events unfolded and attempted to convince LBJ that the conference was nothing more than another "prestige-building exercise" by Nasser to divert attention away from Yemen.[590] Komer told the president that one benefit to the conference was the "downgrading of the Yemen quarrel" giving the administration one less problem to worry about.[591] King Husayn went further and assessed that Nasser not only intended to use the "conference to provide pretext" to divert attention away from the civil war Yemen, but to also end the conflict, which was for his economic benefit.[592]

The issue that directly affected Husayn and the Arab states bordering Israel was Israel's diversion of the Jordan River. The problem of water rights among Israel and the Arab states originated with Israel's founding in 1948. Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson all unsuccessfully attempted to solve the problem. The Eisenhower administration even introduced a plan developed by Eric Johnson known as the Jordan Valley Unified Water Plan, which proposed to share the waters of the Jordan River with Israel, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.[593] When the Johnson Plan foundered in 1955 on Arab fears that Israel intended to develop its agriculture in order to expand into Arab land, the Arab-Israeli conflict heated up and eventually

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[589] Komer to Bundy, January 7, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[590] State Department Telegram, U.S. Embassy in Paris to Washington, January 3, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[591] Memorandum for the Record, January 2, 1964, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[592] State Department Telegram, U.S. Embassy in Paris to Washington, January 3, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[593] Eric Johnson was an American Although Egypt was not directly involved in the water dispute, Nasser saw the dispute as an opportunity to further his pan-Arab goals, which were in its embryonic state in the mid-1950s. See Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: Unite States-Israeli Relations, 1953*-1960 (Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, 1993); and Peter Hahn, *United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

led to the Suez Crisis of 1956. After the Suez War, water rights were not raised again until the early 1960s when the Arab League convened from 1961 to 1962 to discuss plans to prevent Israel from diverting the Jordan River. [594]

As Israel's water plans neared completion in 1964, its Arab neighbors feared the outcome. Ben Aboud laconically explained to his American counterparts that Arabs were terrified that more water meant more fertile land for Israel, which in turn meant more Israeli settlements and expansion on Arab land at the expense of Palestinians. For the Syrian Ba'athists, who tenuously held on to power in Syria, Israel's water program was a direct affront to the country and the party itself, but it was also a blessing. Ben Aboud warned American officials that the Syrian Ba'athists had much to gain from a conflict with Israel and therefore reasoned that although a war would be a lost cause militarily, it would result in a more important political victory for the Ba'athists.[595]

Although the United States attempted to distance itself from Israel concerning the water issue, Arabs across MENA perceived Washington as supporting Israeli water claims and its expansion into Arab land. The pro-Nasser Lebanese daily *al-Hayat* reiterated this perception in a front-page article declaring, "America doesn't view [Israel's] Jordan River plans an aggressive act."[596] The paper went on to state that Washington did not think the plan had historic value and was just a continuation of the Eric Johnson Jordan Valley project of 1953-1955. For the Arabs, Israeli water rights meant Israeli expansion into Arab territory. This mistrust between the belligerents effectively doomed any potential Arab-Israeli plan.

[594] The Suez Crisis in 1956 was due to a number of issues, among them Israeli water rights and Egyptian border raids from Gaza.
[595] State Department Telegram, Cairo Summit, January 12, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[596] Al-Hayat, January 7, 1964.

Komer realized the benefit in an Arab summit, but he also expressed concern that the conference would be used as a staging forum to re-launch the Arab-Israeli conflict and force the United States to choose between Israel and the Arabs. "The hell of it is that all this Arab 'unity' will be at the expense of Israel, which will put us on the spot," Komer complained. The fear among LBJ's advisors was that Nasser would brandish Palestinian suffering like a weapon to cower the moderate Arabs into an anti-Israeli agreement that would hurt American interests in the long run.[597] Komer succinctly told Bundy that "we'll explain our position, gently warn the Arabs that we'd have to back Israel if necessary."[598] Komer advised that they keep in mind that "Arab noise [was] a substitute for action."[599] Johnson's aides worried that Nasser would force the United States to choose sides, in which case it would choose Israel, and the result would be an Arab oil embargo.

The White House then moved to persuade Egypt to tone down the anti-Israeli rhetoric. Komer met with Mohammad Habib, the UAR's press attaché in the United States and the real power at the Egyptian embassy in Washington.[600] Komer told Habib that the Jordan water issue had the potential to unfreeze the Arab-Israeli conflict. Knowing that Habib would convey the message to Nasser, Komer glibly stated to Habib that the United States considers "Nasser as the No. 1 Arab leader" who had the ear of the Arab world and the power to restrain them from doing anything irrational.[601] Using the Gruening Amendment as leverage, Komer warned Habib that if any action were to be taken against Israel, the White House could not contain the response from Congress and "force our hand" on the Arab-Israeli conflict.[602] Habib, unimpressed with Komer's

[597] Komer to Bundy, January 2, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[598] Ibid
[599] Ibid.
[600] Memorandum for the Record, January 3, 1964, *FRUS 1964-1967*,Vol. 18:6-7.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid.

threats, cautioned that Nasser needed a way out of the Jordan waters impasse or the extremist in the region would get the upper hand.[603] To this he added that if the United States did not want Nasser to use the Israeli card, then the White House had to find a solution to Nasser's predicament. But the United States was unwilling to do more than the Johnson Plan of 1955, which the Arabs had already rejected.[604]

Ambassador Badeau continued to press his pro-Nasser strategy. Appointed to his post in 1961, Badeau had served as president of the American University in Cairo from 1945 to 1953, and before that he was the dean of faculty of arts and sciences. Badeau, therefore, understood Egyptian culture and arguably knew more about it more than any other official in the Johnson administration. Egypt remained "the single most important Arab country in the eastern Arab world," he told Johnson. He continued to warn the president that the UAR had the "significant independent capacity to affect American interest in the area," which benefited the United States since it has limited Soviet influence in the region and kept the Arab-Israel conflict contained through "ice box."[605]

Badeau concluded that the United States had "no alternative except to maintain as good relations with Egypt as circumstances permit and by this continue to press for moderation and redirection of Egyptian action." Badeau recommended that the White House dodge misguided Congressional calls to sever economic aid so that Nasser be "brought to heel." He warned that "such a guillotine operation" can be used only once and should, therefore, be used when "American interests of overweening importance are at stake."[606] Badeau cited Yemen as an example where the United States had actually contained the conflict because of the White

[603] Ibid.
[604] Ibid.
[605] Badeau to Johnson, January 3, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.
[606] Ibid.

House's ties to Nasser. Badeau went on to say that the present policy with the UAR has brought the United States "reasonable gains" and has helped in "enhancing American influence" in the region. Despite these differences, Badeau pointed out that no relationship is without its downturns, but the United States had benefitted from this association and "built a considerable measure of influence in the UAR" he added this is only a "modicum for protecting our interest in Egypt and the surrounding Arab world."[607] In short, Badeau argued that the White House should approach the issue pragmatically, not emotionally.

The White House knew from intelligence reports that this was no routine gathering of Arab heads of state in Cairo and could in fact lead to a wider conflict between the Arabs and Israel.[608] Johnson attempted to use Badeau's "considerable measure of influence" with Nasser to encourage him to soften the anti-Israeli tone of the conference. On January 7, Badeau met with Nasser—his first meeting with the Egyptian premier since October 1963—to present him with President Johnson's oral message on Egyptian-American relations. Johnson reminded Nasser of the accomplishments between Cairo and Washington during the Kennedy years and stressed that he, too, wanted to continue the close bond that Nasser and Kennedy had shared. Nasser, however, was unconvinced and told Badeau that he saw signs that Johnson was actually reversing Kennedy's "personal diplomacy" with him.[609] Badeau explained that Johnson wanted to continue Kennedy's policies, but was under Congressional domestic pressure to get more out of the relationship.

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[607] Ibid.
[608] State Department Telegram, "Cairo Chiefs of State Conference," January 5, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA
[609] Telegram Badeau to Rusk, Nasser-Badeau Meeting, January 7, 1964, RG 59, POL 1 UAR-US, Box 2768, NARA.

Looking for another way to convince Nasser to moderate his Middle East policies, Badeau played the Yemen card. The whole Yemeni affair, Badeau told Nasser, was bad for both Egypt and the United States. Due to Congressional pressure, Badeau explained to Nasser that the Yemeni affair limited Johnson's room to maneuver. Badeau pointed out that a Congressional storm against Egypt had developed due to what was perceived on Capitol Hill as the UAR's aggressive Mideast policies. Consequently, Badeau explained that not only did Yemen drain the UAR's foreign exchange and resources, but it also tied the Johnson's hands and complicated American-Egyptian relations. What Badeau was attempting to explain to Nasser was that Johnson, like Nasser, had to deal with these domestic constraints.[610] Nasser, however, remained unimpressed.

Seeing the issue of Yemen was getting him nowhere, Badeau then turned to the Arab summit itself and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The use of force against Israel, either covert or overt and cutting Israeli water supplies from the Jordan River, would lead to more problems than solutions and possibly even war. In this latter case, Badeau warned Nasser, the international community would support Israel. Taken aback by what seemed to him a pro-Israeli attitude, Nasser asked "Do you mean if we were to divert [the] headwaters of Jordan, we would be subject to Israeli aggression?" Badeau responded that the United States saw it differently: "water was such vital interest any state would move to protect it, and this could scarcely be called 'aggression.'"[611]

The message that Badeau conveyed to Nasser was: If you take action against Israel, the United States would stand with the Israelis. Nasser agreed that the Arab-Israeli conflict had to remain frozen in the ice box. Badeau left the meeting convinced that he had persuaded Nasser to

[610] Ibid.
[611] Ibid.

tone down the anti-Israeli belligerence at the Cairo summit.[612] Later events, however, would prove Badeau to have been overly optimistic.

Following the Nasser-Badeau meeting, an editorial by Heikal in *al-Ahram* reflected the sort of anti-Israeli tone that Nasser intended to take at the conference. The water diversion plan was not the real problem, Heikal explained. The origins of the problem, he stated, was colonialism, which he traced to the First World War and the Balfour Declaration that promised Palestine to the Zionist.[613] Heikal continued his anti-Zionist tirade, but then abruptly changed course, stating that although Israel was the main problem for the Arab world, an attack on Israel would not be prudent. The Arab world was militarily weak, Heikal explained, and war with Israel at this point would be disastrous. Heikal told Badeau that his recommendation to Nasser reflected this fact and he suggested to the Egyptian premier to refrain from hostility with Israel and the West. Through Heikal, Nasser announced what he intended for the Arab Cairo summit: an exercise of what Komer termed "Arab noise" without action.

Other moderate Arab states agreed with Nasser's assessment. When Arab nationalists called for an Arab oil boycott if the West sided with Israel, the Arab Gulf States wanted no part of it. The Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Hayat* asked on January 9 "how an Arab boycott [of oil] would be sound?" The paper suggested that the United States was Israel's main ally in the region and would not be affected by the boycott, while countries in Western Europe that were friendly to the Arabs would.[614] Jordan, too, through its state-run *al-Manar*—Husayn's mouthpiece—attempted to influence the general discourse of the summit by asking Arab states to refrain from irrational

[612] Ibid.
[613] Mohammad H. Heikal, *Al-Ahram*, January 9, 1964.
[614] *al-Hayat,* January 9, 1964.

action that would repeat the events of 1948, though without being prepared.[615] King Husayn's message to the Arab world promulgated through *al-Manar* was to call for calm and restraint. He wrote that since the 1948 War, the Arab states have been "beating the war drums" to "satisfy the man on the street," but this was not an effect way to defeat Israeli military, which could easily overpower Arab forces.[616] A number of prominent Arab voices thus echoed Nasser's sound strategic assessment that launching a military conflict against Israel would backfire.

The Cairo Summit

On January 9, the Arab Technical Committee for the Jordan River (ATCJR) opened debate concerning the Jordan waters issue. The last time the ATCJR met was in 1954 when Arab technicians from across the Arab world met to search for a solution to Israel's water plans. Heikal called the meeting a "historic testing ground for Arab unity in the 1960s" because the outcome of the ATCJR would possibly reflected the main Arab Chiefs summit to follow. The ATCJR displayed "Arab unity" and agreed to construct dams along the Jordan River at its source, the Yarmouk River to divert its water into Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria and drastically reduce Israel's water supplies.[617] Nasser planned to use the ATCJR talks as a basis for the larger summit that followed.

Four days after the ATCJR negotiations, on January 13. Nasser welcomed six Arab heads of State at Cairo International Airport. From the start, the hostility between Nasser and Syria's Amin al-Hafez was noticeable. Nasser greeted the Arab leaders warmly and walked back to the terminal, arm-in-arm in conversation. However, al-Amin was treated with scorn. A stony-faced

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[615] King Hussein perhaps had another agenda in mind when he allowed the *al-Manar* article to be published. Hussein knew of Shuqri's diplomatic trips around the Arab world to promote the foundation of a Palestinian national entity in Cairo, which would threaten Hussein's position in the West Bank and in Jordan because a majority of his subjects were Palestinian.
[616] *Al-Manar*, January 10, 1964.
[617] Mohammad Heikal, *al-Ahram*, January 10, 1964.

Nasser shook his hand and then walked "a couple of paces ahead" of the Ba'athist leader.[618] Nasser's coldness stemmed from political differences. Al-Hafez had sacked the Nasserites in Syria and Nasser blamed him for the recent volatility between the Arabs and Israel, so there was little love between them.[619]

In contrast to his tepid greeting to al-Hafez, Nasser greeted Husayn warmly. After walking him from the terminal, he held private talks with Husayn at the airport—one of three Arab leaders Nasser met at the airport that day.[620] Husayn, who had been a rival of Nasser, cut diplomatic relations with Nasser in September. To be sure, relations between Egypt and Jordan were never close to begin with. The airport talks with Husayn, therefore, represented a calculated move by Nasser to use the summit as a solution for Yemen and Palestine. Husayn played an important role in both. Jordan was part of the conservative bloc that had aligned against Nasser in Yemen, and Husayn needed Nasser's support on the Jordan waters conflict with Israel. Nasser intended to use Husayn to break the conservative alliance in Yemen by connecting it to the Arab-Israeli conflict.[621] Nasser thus shrewdly set aside political and personal differences in pursuit of his larger objective.

In addition to Nasser, King Saud also sought to take advantage of the summit. King Saud thought the summit so important that he decided to attend with Crown Prince Faysal. The decision was momentous because King Saud had once attempted to assassinate Nasser. The night before King Saud and Crown Prince Faysal departed for Cairo, they met with Aramco representatives at Dhahran. Aramco executives were concerned that Nasser would sway the

[618] State Department Telegram, "Arab Summit Conference," RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[619] Nutting, *Nasser*, 346.
[620] Ben Bella of Algeria and Arif of Iraq were the other two Nasser met at the airport; both were UAR allies and Nasserist.
[621] Nutting, *Nasser*, 347.

Saudis into agreeing to an Arab oil embargo. The "coffee call" meeting between the Saudi royal family and Aramco reflected the oil company's influence in Saudi Arabia.[622] When Saud arrived at the airport he embraced and kissed Nasser.[623] Like Nasser, Saud also adopted shrewd tactics in order to reach a larger strategic goal.

Afterwards Nasser had a private meeting with Saud where he told him "I don't want Yemen. I don't want to endanger or control any Arab land. I want only that all Arabs should unite against the Israeli threat." Both Saud and Nasser agreed to bury their differences over Yemen and bring peace to Southwestern Arabia.[624] Both Saudi Arabia and Jordan reopened diplomatic relations with the UAR. Nasser found the one issue that united the Arabs—Israel.

Nasser then set about implementing his new strategy. He opened the conference with a call for Arab unity in the face of Israeli aggression. He urged Arab leaders to set aside their differences and unite against Israel's plans to divert the Jordan waters, which he called a "hostile act against Arabs that justifies self-defense."[625] Nasser's burden was to prevent a war with Israel while proving to the Arab world that he was indeed their leader on when it came to matters of regional security. He told the heads of state gathered in Cairo that their only option was a joint military response under Egypt's leadership to coordinate action against Israel.[626] This joint military command gave Nasser total military control over security matters with the states bordering Israel. Nasser therefore set the agenda to Israel's water plans: a joint military command was the façade Nasser needed to make it appear he was actually doing something

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[622] State Department Telegram, Dhahran to State, January 13, 1964, RG 59, POL 2, UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[623] State Department Telegram, "Arab Summit Conference," January 12, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.
[624] *Time*, "Middle East: Euphoria on the Nile," January 24, 1964.
[625] Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at the Opening of the Cairo Summit, January 13, 1964, *al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir vol. 5Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.*
[626] Ibid.

against Israel while at the same time demonstrated to the White House that he was committed to the ice box.[627] Nasser was now embarking on a path of strategic deception in order to placate both Americans and Arabs, all in service of his larger goals.

Nasser's joint military action was officially christened the United Arab Command (UAC). Under the UAC, the Arab states attempted to dam the Banias, Hasbani, and Yarmuk, to divert the flow of the Jordan River and limit Israel's waters, which reflected the recommendations of the ATCJR. Nasser knew this plan would cause Israel to act. From a strategic standpoint, this is perhaps what Nasser intended. That way Nasser could blame the conflict on Israel's aggression and achieve a political victory similar to the one at Suez in 1956. Whatever Nasser's specific rationale for potentially provoking Israel, the ATCJR plan held the prospect of even greater strategic gains. It cleverly maneuvered the conservatives and the Syrian Ba'athists into giving him control over their militaries under the UAC led by one of his most loyal men, Lieutenant General Ali Amer. If his plans worked out, Nasser stood to gain huge political and strategic dividends.

The Creation of the PLO

The Arab summit in January set the agenda of joint Arab strategy against Israel and snatched the waters issue away from the Israelis. Nasser turned next to the forming of a Palestinian entity that would return to him the title of champion Palestinian cause. Yet both Jordan and Syria opposed the idea. King Husayn was adamantly opposed to a Palestinian group representing all the Palestinian factions. He saw such an entity as a rival to his rule in the West Bank and possibly Jordan as well. The Syrians opposed it because it marginalized their own

[627] State Department Telegram, "Arab Summit Conference," January 14, 1964, RG 59, POL 7 UAR, Box 2760, NARA.

plans for a Palestine liberation front. With the idea of a Palestinian organization now on the table, Nasser tactically decided to postpone voting on the issue until the upcoming Arab summit scheduled for August.

Following the January Arab League meeting, Shuqayri, with the support of Nasser, once again toured the Middle East to promote the idea. From May to June he attempted to rally support among the Palestinian in the West Bank. Holding a series of meetings with other Palestinian leaders in East Jerusalem, Shuqayri argued for an organization that would liberate Palestine along the lines of the Algerian revolution. He persuaded the Nasserite-dominated Palestinian National Congress (PNC) in Jerusalem to establish the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the main representative of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism. The PNC later elected Shuqayri the organizations first president, which was really Nasser's choice.[628] In one swift move, Nasser bypassed the Arab states opposed to a Palestinian organization and ended the chances of Syrian proposed Palestinian front.

Conclusion

In 1964, Nasser sought détente in Yemen, and invited the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Jordan to Cairo to discuss Yemen and Palestine. Using the Arab summit in January 1964 to assuage critics who accused him of hiding behind the United Nations while the Arabs bordering Israel suffered repeated attacks from Tel Aviv, Nasser attempted to deal with both Yemen and Palestine in Cairo.[629] The conference was an effort to appease his Arab critics as well as the White House.

[628] Shemesh, *Arab Politics, Palestinian Nationalism and the Six Day War*, 70.n.See also Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity 1959-1974*, 26.
[629] The United Nations peacekeeper had been in Sinai since the 1956 Suez War in order to prevent another war.

In contrast to Nasser, Johnson's advisors saw Nasser's unemotional performance at the Arab summit as proof that the White House affected the way the conference turned out. Nasser's moderation at the summit, State Department officials concluded, resulted in part to American economic aid.[630] White House officials, however, failed to appreciate Nasser's position and it also overplayed the use of economic aid. Despite repeated warnings from moderate Arabs, Johnson's advisors ignored genuine Arab fears that Israeli water plans meant Israeli expansion. Washington also failed to appreciate Nasser's position. The Arab regimes looked to him for a solution. He therefore needed to assuage his Arab critics in the region by exhibiting some sort of action on the Palestinian front while at the same time demonstrate to the United States that he wished to maintain ice box. Moreover, he needed to confront his enemies in Yemen while tackling the Palestinian issue. The Arab summit gave Nasser the forum he needed to control his dilemma.

He cleverly used conference to persuade his enemies in the Arab world that the Arab world was not prepared for a war with Israel and to give him the UAC, which gave Nasser control of the military competent of the water crisis. Simultaneously, Nasser used the summit to persuade the Saudis to agree to a ceasefire agreement in Yemen. This control, however, was momentary and the water issue quickly spiraled out of control from 1965 to 1966 as Palestinian *fedayeen* raids increased along the Jordanian-Israeli border. In Yemen, too, the ceasefire was short-lived as hostilities between Nasser and Saudi Arabia continued until the withdrawal of Egyptian troops in 1967.

[630]" Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy, "U.S. Influence on the Arab Summit Conference," February 12, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 158, UAR Memos, LBJL.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BRITAIN'S COLD WAR WITH NASSER EAST OF SUEZ

Exploitation of Nasser's pragmatic approach so as to moderate his timing and tactics. We seek at most to buy time. To this end we need to reduce the temperature of what has arguably become a cold war between the west, and particularly Britain, and those many Arab nationalists who have taken Nasser as their leader.
-R. T. Higgins[631]

Nasser's moderate approach towards the Arab-Israeli water dispute at the Cairo summit won the approval of Lyndon Johnson's advisors. Johnson and his advisers believed that American economic aid alone successfully moderated Nasser's tone towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and forced him to sideline the Ba'athist radicals in Syria. Similarly, the White House also assumed that the dispatch of American food aid to Egypt made it incumbent upon Nasser to seek peace with Faysal in Yemen. From Johnson's point of view, American food aid succeeded in taming Nasser at the Arab Chiefs Summit. The Johnson administration's hubris led it to conclude that PL-480 played an instrumental role in softening Nasser's hardline stance towards the West and Israel. White House officials, therefore, believed economic aid promoted change in Egyptian policies. If Johnson's officials sought to secure respite from the Arab-Israeli conflict by providing Nasser with food aid, however, the events of 1964-1965 in Southwestern Arabia proved otherwise.

The calm that followed the Cairo summit in 1964 proved short-lived. The prospect of peace between Egypt and Saudi Arabia after the Arab summit fit nicely into the Johnson's administration's Middle East strategy "east of Suez."[632] The White House hoped that once peace

[631] As quoted in McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967*, 207.
[632] American officials wanted Britain to maintain a military presence east of the Suez Canal to help the United States contain and defeat socialist revolutionary forces in the Middle East and Asia.

negotiations were concluded, Britain would encouraged by the outcome of the peace and continue its military presence in Southwestern Arabia.

The peace talks, however, were transitory. By the summer of 1964, differences among the belligerents resurfaced, shattering the undeclared ceasefire between Saudis and Egyptians. By September, Nasser decided to continue his offensive along the Yemeni-Saudi border, while Faysal also continued to finance and arm the Royalists. He also allowed them to continue use Saudi territory to launch attacks into Yemen. By 1965, the détente between Saudi Arabia and Egypt had ended and the Yemen conflict spilled over into Britain's crown colony of Aden and inundated the adjacent South Arabian Federation (SAF). The Anglo-Egyptian clash in the Arabian Peninsula led to yet another security and political dilemma for Nasser.

As a response to the border raids from Yemen Whitehall sent British and Commonwealth mercenaries to aid Royalist forces in Yemen and began to crackdown on Arab nationalist in Aden. Meanwhile, growing discontent in Aden towards British security measures swelled the numbers of Nasserists in Aden and the SAF. Whitehall once again blamed Nasser for the rising anti-British sentiment and ignored its own colonial policies in Aden and the Arabian Peninsula as the reasons behind the rising tensions. London's aid to Royalists and the personnel insults by British Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home towards Nasser seemed to Cairo as a direct affront to the YAR and the UAR. Nasser grew increasingly paranoid and saw conspiracy mounting among Saudi Arabia, Britain, Israel and the United States, all of which he feared were aligned to destroy Nasserism in both Yemen and the entire Arab world. Imagined or otherwise, Nasser's political and security dilemma in the YAR triggered a massive effort by Cairo to pour resources and troops into the YAR. This chapter examines the Anglo-Egyptian conflict in Southwestern Arabia

and the role Saudi Arabia and the United States indirectly played in intensifying Nasser's political and security dilemma in Southwestern Arabia.

Nasser's Security Dilemma confronts Britain's Security Dilemma

During the 1950s, Britain's informal empire in the Middle East slowly vanished as Whitehall withdrew its military forces from Jordan, Iraq, and the Suez Canal Zone. Aden and Libya were all that remained of Whitehall's Mideast empire, and both were to play a vital role in London's strategy to maintain a military and political presence in the Indian Ocean and the Middle East.[633] When the Nasserite revolution broke out in Yemen, Whitehall saw this as a direct affront to its informal empire in Aden and the SAF.[634]

After the Suez debacle in 1956 in which Britain was forced to withdraw from the Suez Canal Zone, British strategy was to maintain a military and political presence east of Suez. Prime Minister Home maintained the same strategy as his predecessors, Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan. In Southwestern Arabia, Home attempted to sustain what remained of Britain's informal empire, but Home departed from Macmillan's rapprochement with Nasser, which mirrored Kennedy's Egypt-first strategy.[635] As part of Home's new approach towards the UAR, the strategy called for public pronouncement of non-intervention in the Yemeni conflict while covertly aiding the Royalists through ammunition airdrops, the use mercenaries, and providing sanctuary to Royalist leaders in the SAF. These moves were intended to undermine the Republicans in Yemen and prolong the confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Like Faysal and Husayn, Home considered Nasser's intervention in Yemen as the first phase in a revised pan-Arab offensive to topple the pro-West Arab conservative regimes throughout

[633] McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967*, 175.
[634] PREM 11/3877, PM M 271/62, Macmillan to Thorneycroft, October 6, 1962, TNA.
[635] For Kennedy's approach towards Egypt, see Chapters One and Two.

MENA.[636] Moreover, Home considered Nasser's intervention in Yemen as part of a larger strategy to develop a battle-ready fighting force that could be used in the Middle East against the conservative regimes.[637] Accordingly, Whitehall's goal in Southwestern Arabia was to encourage a stalemate between Faysal and Nasser in Yemen in order to prevent Nasserism from gaining an advantage in Aden.[638]

In early 1964, Prime Minister Home decided to halt the advance of Arab nationalism into Southwestern Arabia. In order to do this, Home decided to use British troops and Commonwealth mercenaries in covert operations to hasten Nasser's retreat from Southwestern Arabia. [639] Home, therefore, attached Nasser's defeat in Yemen to the survival of Britain's informal empire east of Suez. The use of mercenaries in the YAR added a new dimension to the civil war and exacerbated Nasser's political and security dilemma. But what Home considered defense operations to secure Aden and the SAF appeared to Nasser as offensive acts designed to aid the Royalists in order to defeat Arab nationalism in Southwestern Arabia. This inability to see one's own moves from the perspective of the other side would lead to a clash.

Nasser perceived Home's new strategy as a direct threat to the YAR. To counter Home, Nasser unleashed the Egyptian *Mukhābarāt* (intelligence) to penetrated deep into Aden and the SAF in order to spread anti-British propaganda and to promote pan-Arab Nasserism. This political offensive was followed by a military one. The *Mukhābarāt* trained Aden's Nasserists in guerrilla tactics with the aim of ending Britain's presence in the region.

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[636] PREM 11/3877, PM M 271/62, Macmillan to Thorneycroft, October 6, 1962, TNA.
[637] PREM 11/4928, Sir Harold Bailey (Cairo) to the Foreign Office, September 12, 1963. TNA.
[638] McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967,* 190.
[639] Officially, Aden was part of the Federation of Arab Emirates of South West Arabia, a British effort that merged Arab sheikdoms in Southwestern Arabia into a federation as part of an effort was to slow the march of Nasserism in the Arabian Peninsula. See Peter Hinchcliffe, John T. Ducker, and Maria Holt, eds., *Without Glory in Arabia: The British Retreat from Aden* (London: I.B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2013).

Consequently, Home's vendetta against Nasser backfired. His decision to use mercenaries in Yemen resulted in Nasserism's spread into Aden and the SAF. In addition, Home's strategy to halt Arab nationalism solely relied on the local chieftains, who were detested by a majority of the population for the privileges they enjoyed due to the British presence. Home's efforts to halt Nasserism in Aden, therefore, awoke a dormant political movement that demanded political rights.

What Whitehall failed to see was that the source of its problems in Aden stemmed from the lack of political reform in the SAF and Aden, not Nasser. Since the 1950s, the conservatives, who controlled the heights of government in the SAF, blocked political reforms and instead attempted to suppress the rise of Arab nationalism, which called for greater freedoms and civil rights within the SAF. Whitehall also wanted to prevent the rise of a political progressive movement that appeared in the Arabian Peninsula because it would spell an end to Britain's military presence in the region. In the early 1960s, Prime Minster Macmillan's policymakers attempted to remedy the problem through a combination of political and military reforms.[640] The end result of these reforms was the forming of the SAF and the promise to withdrawal British forces from the region by 1968.

Macmillan's plan, however, did not call for a withdrawal from Aden. Aden was Britain's crown colony, and its role increased in importance after the forced British withdrawal from the Suez Canal Zone in 1956.[641] London, therefore, wanted to maintain control of Aden in order to keep a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula and the strategically important Horn of Africa. Aden's conservatives in Southwestern Arabia preferred this arrangement with London because Britain's

[640] Fist name?? Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East: A Willing Retreat* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), 79.
[641] A Crown Colony meant it was directly ruled from London as opposed to informal rule in which case the British relied on local officials.

military presence in Aden guaranteed their hold on power in region. Ironically, Nasser's successful effort to drive Britain from Suez drove up the value of Aden in London's strategy for the region.

When London announced that it planned to withdrawal from the SAF, but not from Aden, it enraged the Arab nationalists, who demanded that Aden be included in the planned withdrawal. This announcement resulted in what Whitehall had always attempted to avoid: the rise of anticolonial Arab nationalism in the SAF and Aden. The movement remained insignificant and received little or no outside support until Home's anti-Nasser strategy in Yemen forced Nasser to support the nascent nationalistic movement as part of his counteroffensive against Home's new strategy in the region.

Home's Offensive and Nasser's Response

On February 10, 1964, the heated rivalry between Cairo and London took on a personal aspect when Home publicly attacked Nasser in Ottawa, Canada. In that speech, which became infamously known as the "Ottawa Speech," Home publically expressed his regret that President Eisenhower had intervened to save Nasser during the Suez Crisis.[642] Nasser interpreted the speech as a direct affront. He saw Home as adapting the same approach Anthony Eden did during Suez. Before Home's speech, Nasser had attempted to confine the fighting to Yemen. But Home's speech underlined what Whitehall really desired, which from Nasser's point of view was to remove him from power. Nasser therefore regarded the Ottawa Speech as a blueprint for British policies in Southwestern Arabia with the end result of weakening Nasser to the extent

[642] During the Suez Crisis, Britian led by Prime Minister Antony Eden attempted to remove Nasser from power. For the Suez Crisis see Chapter Two. For the Ottawa Speech see McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967*, 191. See also "Home Reaffirms Determination of Britain to Defend South Arabia and Aden," *NY Times*, May 8, 1964.

that it would lead to his overthrow.[643] To Nasser, it seemed that Home had abandoned Macmillan's rapprochement strategy and adapted Anthony Eden's hardline approach.[644] Once again, perceptions were shaping strategy.

Less than two weeks after Home's address, Nasser politically struck back. During his annual *Khtbit Eid al-Wahida* (Unity Speech) commemorating the UAR's merger with Syria, Nasser denounced Britain's neocolonial empire in Libya, the Arabian Peninsula, and Cyprus. Moreover, Nasser condemned Home's "divide and rule" strategy in support of a policy that would keep the Arab world divided for the benefit Britain.[645] As part of this strategy, Nasser told the crowd that Britain created Israel to maintain both a physical and a political division of the Arab world. According to Nasser, the bastions of British imperialism—the military bases in Libya and Aden—must be eliminated in order to defeat British imperialism.[646]

In early March, Nasser unleashed a military campaign to pacify resistance in the SAF. UAR and YAR allied forces conducted guerrilla raids deep into Aden in an attempt to end raids into Yemen and to provide material support for the Arab nationalists in the SAF. In the weeks following the Unity Speech, Nasser stepped up his anti-British campaign throughout MENA. In Libya, he pressured the Libyan government to oppose the British military base near Tripoli and Benghazi. In Cyprus, Nasser supported the Greek Cypriots who were opposed to British rule on the Mediterranean island. In Aden, Nasser provided substantial political and military support to the Aden liberation movement fighting to end British rule.

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[643] McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East*, *1952-1967*, 191.
[644] Telegram from the Embassy in the UAR to the Department of State, May 8, 1964, *FRUS*, Vol. 21:336.
[645] Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at Cairo University Commemorating Eid al-Wahida , February 22, 1964, *al-Majmū'ah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah*.
[646] Ibid.

In early March, Nasser resumed the offensive. UAR fighter planes violated SAF airspace, and allied YAR and UAR forces attacked deep into the SAF. In addition, terror attacks against British forces and Aden's royalist government increased. Although these attacks were small and the resulting causalities light, they spurred increased security measures to prevent further attacks. These stepped up measures meant that Whitehall was diverting more and more human and material resources to Southwestern Arabia during a time of economic stagnation in Britain.

Nasser's offensive, however, extended beyond anti-British speeches and guerrilla attacks in Aden. On March 26, Nasser nationalized the assets of the British-owned Shell and British Petroleum Company then operating in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. Nasser chose not to nationalize the adjacent American oil company, meaning that the attack was directed at Britain alone.[647] That same month he increased his propaganda against Whitehall's presence in Libya. He especially targeted Whitehall's continued use of Libyan air bases as neocolonialism. To Home, Nasser's attack on Cyprus, Aden, Libya, and Egypt seemed part of a coordinated effort designed to accelerate Britain's evacuation from the MENA in order to weaken London's position globally.[648] Yet another case where perceptions were shaping strategy.

Although Home had to deal with a growing balance-of-payments problem due to Britain's overextended global commitments, Home's policymakers felt that Nasserism in Southwestern Arabia presented a greater danger for Britain than British financial difficulties.[649] The cabinet determined that a Yemen led by a Nasserist regime threatened Aden and Britain's influence in the Arabian Peninsula.[650] As a result, in April, Home's cabinet unanimously decided

[647] CAB/128/38, April 9, 1964, TNA.
[648] CAB/128/38, April 9,1964; and CAB/195/24, April 9, 1964, TNA
[649] Hubert Zimmermann, "The Sour Fruits of Victory: Sterling and Security in Anglo-German Relations during the 1950s and 1960s," *Contemporary European History*, (2000), 9: 2, 225-44.
[650] FO 371 174635 BM/1041/64, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis to Duncan Sandys, April 23, 1964, TNA.

to "rid the Yemen of the UAR" and to expunge Nasserism from Aden and the SAF. [651] Moreover, Home's saw Nasser's presence in Yemen as a clear and present danger to Britain's position in Indian Ocean and Arabian Peninsula.[652] Britain's security dilemma forced London to increase aid to the Royalists in Yemen via Aden. Nasser responded in kind with cross-border raids and air attacks into the SAF and Aden. He also stepped up his financial support for the Arab nationalists. As a result of Nasser's support for the nationalists in the SAF and Aden, Whitehall increased its support for the Royalists in Yemen by sending more British mercenaries into that country. The vicious cycle of move counter move underscored the security and political dilemmas confronting both London and Cairo.

On April 23, Nasser made a surprise visit to Sana'a, Yemen to boost the morale of UAR troops and to reconfirm UAR support for Republican regime. Although Nasser once again verbally attacked Britain's position in the Middle East and its neocolonial policies in Aden, Nasser's speech this time was more pretentious and haughty than his previous discourses. In that April speech in *Midan Tahrir* (Liberation Square) in Sana'a, Nasser underscored his belief in Yemen's importance to Nasserism by comparing the Yemeni revolution to Mohammad's Islamic revolution in 600 CE.[653] Nasser told the crowd in Sann'a that the Yemeni revolution was similar to the Islamic revolution which spread Islam to Asia and other parts of the world. Nasser declared that it was Yemen that catapulted Islam to greatness and raised the banners of Islam across the globe in its fight against "tyranny and despotism." Nasser then went on to compare British rule in Aden to British rule in Palestine and as part of Zionist plot designed to keep the

[651] Ibid.
[652] Ibid.
[653] The rise of Islam in 610 CE has been often referred to as a revolution by Muslims and Mideast scholars. Nasser too used the same language in 1964.

Arab world divided in order to benefit Israel. Nasser concluded his speech by warning that Aden was the first step in Whitehall's plan to re-impose imperialism in the Arab world.[654]

There is a good chance that Nasser intended this speech to be more than just a morale booster. Perhaps Nasser really meant what he said about the Yemen revolution similarity to the Islamic revolution. He might have even yearned for his revolution that began in 1952 to spread from Egypt to Yemen and across the Arab world—to unite it from Morocco to the Persian Gulf. Whatever his true intent, the speech did nothing to help Britain's situation in Southwestern Arabia. In May, a major offensive by 200 UAR-trained guerrillas, the so-called the National Liberation Front, conducted attacks against British forces in Aden.[655] Home reiterated Britain's strategy to withdraw from the SAF by 1968, but it would remain in Aden after the deadline. Home's announcement led to a surge in anti-British demonstrations and acts of sabotage committed against British interests in Southwestern Arabia. Home's hopes to defeat Nasserism in Aden with political reforms in the SAF and a military operation in Yemen failed and the unrest continued throughout the year. By September 1964, Home's Conservatives lost to Labour, and the Labour government promised to reverse Home's strategy in Southwestern Arabia.

Lyndon Johnson's Approach to Yemen

Nasser's confrontation with Britain in Southwestern Arabia triggered a surge of anti-British propaganda throughout the Arab world. In the summer of 1964, Nasser's allies in the Arab media stepped up their verbal assault, accusing London of neo-imperialism in Southwestern Arabia. This occurred as Nasser's forces, led by Amir, stepped-up their guerrilla

[654] Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at Liberation Square Statement by April 23, 1964, al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir Vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah.
[655] McNamara, *Britain, Nasser, and the Balance of Power in the Middle East, 1952-1967*, 196.

attacks in Aden.[656] This clash between London and Cairo had wider implications, as it jeopardized Johnson's strategy to sustain and prolong Britain's presence east of Suez. The Anglo-Egyptian rivalry in Southwestern Arabia also endangered American-Egyptian relations for Johnson preferred London over Cairo.[657]

Nasser's reaction to Home's Yemen offensive also pitted the State Department against Congress. State Department officials continued to argue that American economic aid worked as a tool to control Nasser's actions, while Congress pressured the White House to sever relations with Egypt to express American dissatisfaction with his anti-Western policies. In 1964, the bickering in Washington over Egypt resulted in the first visible cracks in American-Egyptian relations since the détente established under Dwight Eisenhower in 1958.

Meanwhile, Britain continued its "clean up" operations along the SAF-YAR border, and sustained its material and military support towards the Royalists.[658] Nasser reacted with further bombing raids and guerrilla attacks inside Aden. The United States recognized the dangers of the Anglo-Egyptian rivalry in Southwestern Arabia and attempted to reconcile both sides, but both Nasser and Home refused to negotiate.

On April 30, Badeau met Hassan Sabri el-Kholi, Nasser's personnel representative, to communicate Johnson's stance concerning the Nasser-Home showdown in Southwestern Arabia. Badeau told el-Kholi that the White House believed Aden played a vital role in America's postwar order and was significant to the Western "world global defense posture" against the Soviet Union. Britain's presences in Aden, Badeau told el-Kholi, was part of this strategy, and as a result the Anglo-Egyptian rivalry threatened the "world global defense posture."[659] American

[656] DCI Briefing for the House Appreciations Committee, June 16, 1964, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[657] Little, "Nasser Delenda Est: Lyndon Johnson, the Arabs, and the 1967 Six-Day War," 145-167.
[658] Ibid.
[659] Telegram from Badeau to Rusk, May 2, 1964, UAR Cables, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 158, LBJL.

officials hoped to convince Nasser that Aden was an important part of the United States' grand strategy to contain and defeat Communism, and that the Egyptian president's face-off with Home hurt Washington's Cold War efforts .

Despite Badeau's intentions, Nasser instead interpreted Johnson's warning as a new American approach towards Egypt. "If Britain demands we get out of Yemen, then we demand they get out of Aden as well… [Egypt's goal] is to expel the English and their [military] bases from every corner of the Arab world, Nasser told the crowd in Republican Square on May 1. Nasser saved his most passionate rhetoric for the United States and the reason he thought Johnson warned him: "Britain and the United States plunder and exploit Arab oil to benefit Israel . . . while American greatness is built with Arab blood." Nasser's anti-Americanism signaled a departure from the détente established in American-Egyptian relations during the Kennedy era.[660]

For Nasser, Aden was an afterthought and an extension of the civil war in the YAR. The May 1 speech signaled Nasser's frustration with the situation he faced in the YAR. Egyptian troops were dying in Southwestern Arabia and Nasser laid the blame on Home, Faysal, and, after Badeau's message, Johnson. Badeau, because of his years of experience in Egypt, understood Nasser and the frustration many Egyptians felt because of the war in Yemen. In a telegram to Secretary of State Rusk, Badeau explained that Nasser's violent attack against the United States and Britain on May 1 was a result of the "Yemen imbroglio." Badeau warned Rusk that although outsiders perceived things were going well for Nasser in Yemen, they were in fact "not going anywhere at all." The problem for Nasser was that although Egyptian forces were defeating the Royalists on the battlefield and had them on the run, the Royalists were able to replenish

[660] Statement by President Gamal Abdul Nasser at Republican Square, May 5, 1964, al-Majmūʻah al-kāmilah li-khuṭab wa-aḥādīth wa-taṣrīḥāt Jāmāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir vol. 5 Series: Waqfīyat Jamāl ʻAbd al-Nāṣir al-thaqāfīyah

themselves thanks to a constant stream of Saudi and British aid that breathed new life into nearly defeated movement. This outside support continued to frustrate Nasser's plans for Southwestern Arabia by threatening the downfall of the YAR's weak republican regime, which could not last without Egyptian support.[661]

Since the beginning of the Yemeni revolution in 1962, Nasser competed with Faysal for the hearts and minds of the Yemeni tribes. A year and half after the revolution, Nasser had little to show for his efforts.[662] Faysal's oil money and British financing surpassed the aid given by Nasser. Riyadh's and London's funding materialized in the form of mercenaries, arms, and supplies to the Royalist forces, and absent Egypt's financial support, the YAR's feeble government and unstable economy would soon collapse .[663] The Anglo-Saudi effort enabled the Royalists to sustain the fight against the Republicans and thus continue to block Nasser's plans while draining Egypt's coffers.

What troubled Nasser more than financial and material support was the use of mercenaries in the YAR. As mentioned above, Whitehall had supplied the Royalists with British and Commonwealth mercenaries since 1963. Nasser suspected the use of British mercenaries, but could not substantiate his claim until his forces captured British combatants operating with the Royalists inside the YAR in late 1963. These military freelancers coordinated their efforts with the Royalists to conduct hit-and-run operations against YAR and UAR targets. In one such ambush operation in 1963 against UAR forces, British mercenaries left 85 Egyptian soldiers dead and many more wounded.[664] These surgical strikes hurt Nasser both in Yemen and at home as well. Egyptian boys coming home in coffins was a far cry from the victory parades that Nasser

[661] Telegram from Badeau to Rusk, May 3, 1964, UAR Cables, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 158, LBJL.
[662] Ibid.
[663] Telegram from Badeau to Rusk, May 3, 1964, UAR Cables, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 158, LBJL
[664] Jones, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War*, 137.

had envisioned when he first sent troops to Yemen in 1963. Arresting the flow of these mercenaries was one of Nasser's priorities.

Johnson's advisors also failed to understand Home's reasoning in the use of mercenaries.[665] In addition to the use of hired combatants in the YAR and financial support to the Royalists, Whitehall continued to deny recognition of the YAR, which fueled Nasser's belief that Britain's real intentions were to overthrow the Republican regime and reinstate the Royalists.

Nasser's solution to the Anglo-Saudi predicament was to engineer a massive military and political campaign targeted against Saudi Arabia and Britain. In pursuit of this campaign, Cairo intensified its cross-border raids into Saudi Arabia, while Egypt's propaganda machine trained its sites on Britain's military instillations in Aden, Libya, and Cyprus. In addition to the guerrilla attacks against Saudi Arabia and the political assaults against Britain, Nasser supplied Arab nationalist across Southwestern Arabia with material support by sending Egyptians and YAR troops into SAF and Aden to attack British and SAF police stations. When Badeau questioned Nasser why he stepped up his campaign against Johnson's wishes, Nasser replied, "because of this [British attacks against the YAR] our men are being killed and I cannot accept this, hence my attack on the British."[666] Nasser elaborated by telling Badeau that Home escalated the conflict first by sending mercenaries and supplies into the YAR and further escalated the situation by requesting the Washington cut aid to Egypt; thus he, Nasser, was only reacting to Home's offensive.[667] Such action-reaction-counteraction sequence is the essence of the strategic dilemma. Each side sees its own moves as a response to the moves of the other side.

[665] Telegram from Badeau to Rusk, May 3, 1964, UAR Cables, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 158, LBJL.
[666] Circular Telegram from the State Department to the Embassy in the UAR, May 8, 1964, *FRUS* Vol. 21:336.
[667] Ibid.

Despite the use of British mercenaries and military aid to the Royalists, the White House sided with Britain because Johnson wanted to prevent a premature British withdrawal from Aden. Hence, when Johnson's advisors persistently pressured Nasser to cease his attacks in Aden, he responded by increasing his support for the YAR regime. Nasser viewed Johnson's stance on the issue as one-sided. Nasser also saw Johnson as siding with Home in the Yemeni conflict. Since Nasser viewed a premature UAR withdrawal from Yemen as tantamount to abandoning pan-Arabism, and was convinced that pulling out of Yemen would lead to the collapse of the YAR and the reestablishment of the Royalist regime as well as a victory for the conservatives in Arab cold war, he decided to escalate rather than retreat. In consequence, Egypt increased the flow of UAR troops and equipment to the YAR, which reduced the prospects for peace and a timely British and Saudi withdrawal from Southwestern Arabia.

When Johnson's advisors confronted Nasser on the issue, he replied that retreat was out of the question and that he needed to not only sustain the fight, but make Britain pay. Through conversation with Badeau on the situation in Southwestern Arabia, Nasser unintentionally revealed to Badeau his three objectives in Southwestern Arabia: first, end the conflict in the YAR by forcing Saudi Arabia to recognize the YAR and, therefore, in the process expunge Saudi Arabia from the scene; second, once Faysal was removed from the picture in Yemen, consolidate the YAR's regime and use the country to launch an "anti-imperialist crusade" against Britain in the in the Arabian Peninsula; and finally, punish Whitehall "sufficiently hard" with "political consequences" throughout the Middle East for supporting the Royalists. Nasser's campaign to eject London from Aden therefore was not only a reaction to Faysal's and Home's

cross-border raids into Yemen, but became a struggle to end Britain's presence in the Middle East.[668]

The Saudi and British Political Dilemmas in Southwestern Arabia

Unsurprisingly, Nasser's political objectives collided with those of Faysal and Home. In 1964, Faysal fought to hold on to power in 1964 against his half-brother, King Saud. The Yemen civil war set the power struggle within the Saudi Kingdom ablaze. A military victory for Faysal in Yemen meant a political victory for him against King Saud. Faysal had won the support of the Saudi National Guard—the main military branch in Saudi Arabia—by sustaining the military campaign in Yemen. The support of the Saudi National Guard, therefore, depended on sustaining the offensive in Yemen. A retreat from Yemen would mean not only a victory for Nasserites against conservatives in the Arabian Peninsula, but end Faysal's efforts to rule Saudi Arabia. Although Faysal's military expedition was strictly a military one, designed to defeat the Republican and reestablish the Royalists in Yemen, it was also intended to consolidate power within the Saudi royal family. Similar to Nasser, Faysal faced a political dilemma of his own in the Arabian Peninsula.[669]

Home, too, faced a similar security and political dilemma in Southwestern Arabia, in many ways similar to those of Nasser and Faysal. Aden and the SAF were the keystones to Britain's informal empire east of Suez. British defense strategy for Singapore and Malaysia depended on Aden playing a key role in the defense of the informal empire. Aden, coupled with other bases across the Indian Ocean, was needed to bolster British defense in order to secure Singapore and Malaysia.[670]

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[668] Telegram from Badeau to Rusk, May 3, 1964, UAR Cables, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 158, LBJL.
[669] Britain East of Suez," Central Intelligence Special Report, June 18, 1965, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[670] Ibid.

Britain's forces east of Suez were concentrated in two areas: the Middle East Command in Aden and the Far East Command in Singapore. Additionally, Britain held military facilities in Australia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), New Zealand, Pakistan, and various Indian Ocean islands.[671] Aden was Britain's "most valuable military asset." Indeed, it housed the largest British garrison in the west Singapore and protected London's oil interests in the Persian Gulf, Arabian Peninsula, and Indian Ocean. It also contributed to the Western defense system that included North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for Europe, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) for the Middle East, and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) for the Far East.[672] But Aden was more than an important military outpost for London, it was also a financial asset, holding the largest bunkering port and third largest commercial port in the Commonwealth.[673]

In addition to its important role to the defense of Singapore and Malaysia, Aden was key to the defense of Horn of Africa but this position had quickly eroded in 1964.[674] Aden, the link of Britain's colonial empire east of Suez and west of Singapore, experienced an upsurge in revolutionary activity in 1964. Moreover, the leftist National Liberation Front (NLF) in Aden, which was financially supported by Nasser, led the revolutionary effort to eject Britain from the region. Home's mercenaries in Yemen and Nasser's support for the NLF had spread the Yemeni civil war to Aden.

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[671] Ibid.

[672]Britain faced other difficulties east of Suez such as in Malaysia where London attempted to prevent Chinese Communist infiltration deep into Southeast Asia. The concept behind NATO, CENTO, and SEATO was to create a wall of allied states stretching from Western Europe to the Middle East to Asia as part of the defense to prevent Soviet Communism from spreading into the areas, the so called containment policy; for the origins of this strategy see George F Kennan and John Lukacs, eds., *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Containment, 1944-1946 : The Kennan-Lukacs Correspondence* (Columbia : University of Missouri Press, 1997); and John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[673] Intelligence Memorandum, "the Security Situation in Aden," June 9, 1965, *FRUS*, vol. 21:143.

[674] Britain East of Suez," Central Intelligence Special Report, June 18, 1965, NARA/CIA/ORIS.

If the White House hoped to prolong Britain's 130-year rule in Aden, Home's strategy to eradicate Arab nationalism in the SAF by indirectly attacking the Republicans in Yemen deflated any hopes of using Aden as base to contain Communism east of Suez. The Johnson administration wanted to use Britain to buttress its own plans for Southeast Asia and Indochina, but this ended with Home's decision to attack Arab nationalism in Yemen.[675] The showdown between Nasser and Home complicated American plans for the Middle East, and Southeast Asia as well. In fact, the former had the potential to create a power vacuum in the Arabian Peninsula that could be exploited by the Soviet Union.[676]

Nasser's Political and Security Dilemma

Nasser likewise wanted to avoid a premature withdrawal from Southwestern Arabia. A retreat from Yemen would spell a defeat for Nasserism in the Middle East, and he found his forces overextended and his resources drained as a result of the conflict in Southwestern Arabia. Similarly, President Sallal needed a steady supply of Egyptian financing, military equipment, and troops to sustain the Yemeni Republican Revolution against the combined forces of the Royalists, Britain, and Saudi Arabia. The YAR, therefore, needed a steady supply of Egyptian currency and troops against what seemed to Sallal as unsurmountable odds.

The White House appreciated the complexity of the situation in Southwestern Arabia and pondered the consequence of a British defeat Aden or a Saudi defeat in Yemen—which would create a power vacuum that the Soviet Union could exploit. Washington, therefore, attempted to persuade the belligerents to set aside their differences and negotiate a settlement. What most concerned Johnson's advisors were the moves and countermoves taken by both sides. As

[675] Circular Telegram from the State Department to the Embassy in the UAR, April 25, 1964, *FRUS* vol. 21: 54.
[676] Ibid.

Washington attempted to convince Whitehall that its strategy in Southwestern Arabia was counterproductive, Badeau met with Nasser to convince him wider implications of the conflict for America and Egypt.

When it came to dealing with Nasser, Johnson and Rusk relied on Badeau. A career diplomat, Arabist, and former president of the American University in Cairo, Badeau had lived in the Middle East since 1928. Because of his Middle East connections, he was President Kennedy's first choice for ambassador to Egypt. Badeau was close to Nasser and knew him well. He even provided the introduction to Nasser's *The Philosophy of the Revolution*—Nasser's blueprint for Egypt's leading role in Africa, the Middle East, and the Islamic world.

Badeau's deep knowledge about Egypt and familiarity with Nasser led him to worry about the Egyptian president's next move. Badeau's experiences suggested that when Nasser was backed into a corner, he reacted emotionally rather than strategically. Badeau warned Rusk that United States needed to avoid a situation similar to the pre-Suez Crisis in which Nasser reacted to British and American attempts to keep him in check by nationalizing the Suez Canal.[677] Badeau knew that Nasser faced a similar situation in Southwestern Arabia.[678]Nasser's next move might trigger further escalation and a wider war beyond Southwestern Arabia and perhaps engulf the entire region—a scenario the White House wanted to avoid.

Following the Nasser-Badeau meeting, and weeks after Nasser disclosed the use of British Mercenaries operating in Yemen, White House officials attempted to encourage Nasser to negotiate a settlement with Faysal and withdraw from Yemen. Efforts to encourage Nasser had

[677] Britain East of Suez," Central Intelligence Special Report, June 18, 1965, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[678] The lessons of the Suez War in 1956 are one such example of this. Nasser felt pressured by his political opponents at home and abroad. At home the lack of political progress caused the political unrest; abroad, the withdrawal of Anglo-American funding for the Aswan Dam and Israeli raids on Gaza caused him to nationalize the Suez Canal. Although the war was a political disaster for Nasser, more importantly, it was a political victory for the tripartite attack (Israel, Britain, and France) were forced to reverse their actions by Eisenhower.

been an American strategy since Kennedy, but Johnson's advisors attempted to convince Nasser that the war in Yemen led to an upsurge of domestic opposition in Egypt—which Nasser knew and did not need convincing from the White House that Egyptians were unhappy with the state of affairs in Yemen.

The Faysal-Nasser peace talks, however, failed due to Faysal's continued support for Royalists and his encouragement of guerrilla raids into the YAR.[679] Nasser reacted to these attacks as Badeau had predicted—by escalating the conflict. Nasser's forces with YAR troops conducted tank raids into Saudi Arabia with the aim of destroying suspected Royalist hideouts. Nasser had done this in the past, but the past attacks were aimed at mountain hideouts. What made this assault different was it attacked the Saudi frontier villages of Jalaban, Twal, and Malwan. Saudi civilians were killed in the reprisal raids, causing the peace talks in Riyadh to collapse.

Once the talks in Riyadh ended with no agreement, Nasser decided to pull out of the last remaining joint Egyptian-Saudi observation post near the Yemeni-Saudi border, an indication that the Yemeni conflict was far from over.[680] The heightened tension over Yemen in August between Egypt and Saudi Arabia proved that that the Arab unity between the conservatives and progressives was not possible, and the unity developed at the Cairo summit in January 1964 was a sideshow to highlight to Israel the façade of Arab unity.

When the Nasser-Faysal talks collapsed, Faysal feared that the Saudi Kingdom would be overrun by Arab nationalism, so he asked Johnson for help in confronting Nasser. But the White

[679] Telegram from London to Secretary of State, May 2, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 155, Saudi Arabia Cables, LBJL.
[680] Telegram from Parker T. Hart (Jidda) to the Department State, August 11, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 155, Saudi Arabia Cables, LBJL. There were five joint observation post set up by Nasser and Faysal to contain the Yemeni conflict until peace talks resolved differences between the two, but by August Nasser withdrew from all the observation post.

House rejected Prince Sultan's pleas to force the United States into a confrontation with Nasser. When Johnson rejected Faysal's proposal, the Crown Prince attempted to play the Soviet card by expressing his concerns to Ambassador Park T. Hart about Soviet machinations in the Red Sea supported by Nasser. Faysal told Hart that Saudi intelligence identified a "Soviet directed-fishing fleet" operating out of the Egyptian Red Sea base at Ras Banas.[681] Faysal suggested to Hart that Nasser worked closely with the Kremlin to undermine Saudi and American postwar strategy to prevent Soviet penetration into the Arabian Peninsula. These attempts and others failed to get the White House to abandon Nasser. Johnson's advisors —Badeau among them—hoped to persuade Nasser to return to the negotiating table.

In August, the Saudis tried yet once more to get Johnson to intervene on their behalf. Prince Sultan, Faysal's half-brother, and the minister of defense, met Hart to suggest that Johnson send a squadron of U.S. fighter planes to protect the Saudi Kingdom from UAR cross border raids. Despite this pressure, Hart, too, reiterated Johnson's suggestions that Faysal cease aiding the Royalists and allowing them to use Saudi territory to launch raids into the YAR.[682] As peace talks were mired by Faysal's and Nasser's intransigence in August 1964, Whitehall's attempts to force Nasser to compromise in Aden through the use of mercenaries also faded.

The Fall of the Home Government and Nasser's Security Dilemma

The Home plan to defeat Nasser in Southwestern Arabia called for "more forceful" counterinsurgency strategy to impress upon Nasser the importance of Aden to Whitehall. Moreover, Home wanted to reassure the tribal chieftains in the SAF—London's traditional allies

[681] Telegram from the Embassy in Saudi Arabia to the Department of State, June 23, 1964, *FRUS* 1964-1968 Vol. 21:230.
[682] Telegram from Parker T. Hart (Jidda) to the Department State, August 11, 1964, NSF, Files of Robert W. Komer, Box 155, Saudi Arabia Cables, LBJL.

in the region—that Britain was committed to its allies and would buttress their rule with Britain's military. In addition, Home's government wanted to send the Nasserist a message: London would not accept a Nasserist regime in Aden and the SAF.[683]

As a countermeasure to UAR forces in Southwestern Arabia, Whitehall boosted the SAF's defenses by including the advanced surface-to-air Thunderbird missiles. The English Electric Thunderbird was developed shortly after the Second World War for use against high-attitude aircraft. Along with its semi-active homing guidance system, the Thunderbird was clearly intended for Tupolev Tu-16 strategic bombers, which were flying daily missions from Egypt to bomb targets in Yemen, Aden, and Saudi Arabia. In addition to the Thunderbirds, Home sent British military "advisers" deep into the YAR to coordinate Royalist forces in guerilla attacks against UAR and YAR forces.[684]

The Thunderbirds above all concerned Johnson's advisors because they threatened to escalate the conflict and introduce an arms race in the Yemeni conflict, and to destabilize the surrounding oil producing sheikdoms.[685] The White House cautioned Whitehall against the introduction of weapons to Southwestern Arabia, and recommended Home reassess his commitments to the Royalists in the YAR. But for Home, British interest in Southwestern Arabia—especially the security of Aden—transcended Anglo-American interests.

Just as Badeau predicted, Nasser countered Home's offensive with a counteroffensive of his own. In the spring and summer of 1964, Nasser unleashed the Egyptian *Mukhābarāt*, the country's intelligence agency. Egyptian intelligence officers infiltrated deep into the Yemeni hinterland and attempted to bribe the local tribesmen who supported Imam Badr. Nasser's

[683] Central Intelligence Bulletin, May 8, 1964, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[684] Jones, *Britain and the Yemeni Civil War, 1962-1965*, 150-155.
[685] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, September 21, 1964, *FRUS* 1964-1968 vol. 21:231.

Mukhābarāt attempted to persuade them to abandon the Yemeni prince and to assassinate members of the royal family. In addition, the Nasserite media throughout the Middle East supported the strategy with an anti-British propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the Yemeni royal family.[686]

Nasser's ploy worked. Imam Badr's brother, Crown Prince Hassan, suffered a tactical defeat when his tribesmen deserted him and joined the YAR forces. The tribesmen raided Hassan's camp, and seeing the tide turn against Hassan, his body guard abandoned him, forcing the prince to flee.[687] Whitehall looked on in horror as the events unfolded. As Nasser's forces gained ground, Home wanted to desperately prevent Nasser from gaining a foothold in Southwestern Arabia. Whitehall responded with secret parachute drops to aid the Royalists enhance their defense. Additional British mercenaries arrived to help the Royalists coordinate attacks against YAR and UAR forces.

Home's war in Yemen was unpopular in Britain. Thus when media reports of British mercenaries operating in Yemen circulated in Britain, the opposition Labour Party used the reports to discredit Home's strategy in Southwestern Arabia, resulting in the downfall of the Conservatives. The rise of the Labour Party and Prime Minister Harold Wilson was due in part to Home's intransigence in Southwestern Arabia. Britain's problems mounted in 1964, as the growing cost of maintaining an overseas empire east of Suez cost Whitehall a $2 billion balance-of-payments deficit, which forced many Britons to reassess the leadership of the country.[688]

In October 1964, Harold Wilson's Labour Party won a majority in parliament, leading to his elevation as prime minster. Wilson, like many Britons, questioned Home's defense

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[686] Ibid.
[687] Ibid., 156.
[688] "Britain East of Suez," Central Intelligence Special Report, June 18, 1965, NARA/CIA/ORIS. $2 billion in 1956 is about $17 billion today.

commitments in the Arabian Peninsula. Wilson and the Labour Party campaigned as anticoloninialists and deeply opposed to the spendthrift colonial policies of Conservatives and Home—who insisted on maintaining Britain's presence east of Suez. Indeed, Aden and Yemen required 100,000 troops and $1 billion annually while Britain suffered a $2 billion balance-of-payment deficit.[689] Wilson promised during his election campaign to reassess the Home's colonial strategy, which depended on maintaining a substantial troops presences east of Suez and west of Singapore.[690]

Wilson, however, feared that a premature withdrawal east of Suez would threaten the vital oil supplies on which Britain's economy depended. Moreover, an abrupt retreat would leave the region vulnerable to the tide of Arab nationalism that was then sweeping the Arabian Peninsula. If unchecked, this nationalist tide meant a possible end to the conservative regimes allied with Britain. Although Wilson wanted to stop the bleeding in Britain's balance-of-payments by withdrawing from Aden, he found that such action could not be done overnight and needed time. An abrupt retreat from Southwestern Arabia would lead to consequences that could haunt Britain in the long-term. As a result, Wilson's government withheld recognition of the YAR in order to regenerate the confidence of Britain's allies in the SAF, many of whom saw Wilson's policies as tantamount to abandonment of Aden to Nasser.

When confronted by Johnson's advisors on the issue of Wilson's strategy in Southwestern Arabia, British Foreign Secretary Gordon Walker attempted to justify Wilson's actions to U.S. Secretary of State Rusk. Walker told Rusk that recognition had to be calculated in

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[689] Ibid.

[690] This came at the same Wilson reassessed Britain's commitments to NATO and other overseas obligations such as aiding the United States in Vietnam. For an explanation how this affected Anglo-American relations, see Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*. For Britain's economic problems in the Cold War, see Glen O'Hara, *Governing Post-War Britain: The Paradoxes of Progress* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012); and David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain 1920-1970* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

a way to guarantee the continued existence of the SAF and secure the southern borders of Saudi Arabia against UAR attacks.[691] In other words, Wilson's government saw recognition of the YAR as tantamount to retreat and abandonment of the SAF. The Arabian Peninsula would then become vulnerable to Arab nationalism and threaten Britain's oil supplies.[692] If Britain were to prematurely withdraw from Aden, the result would be a political and psychological victory for Nasserism.

Johnson's hopes for an Anglo-Egyptian rapprochement did not materialize in 1964. When it came to Southwestern Arabia and the Middle East, Wilson and his Labour government were just as committed as Home and Labour to Britain's informal empire in the region.[693] Although he promised to change course once in office, Wilson's strategy for Southwestern Arabia mirrored Home's plans. For Wilson, Aden was a "major logistic and command post" that was vital to the maintenance of what remained of London's empire east of Suez.[694]

As a result of Wilson's stratagem in Southwestern Arabia, the stalemate that obtained under Home in the region continued between November 1964 and June 1965. To this end, Wilson's task was daunting. He knew that Britain suffered financially from the conflict in Southwestern Yemen, and to simultaneously withdraw from the region meant abandoning London's conservative allies and—and more importantly—its informal empire east of Suez. He therefore saw no alternative but to follow Home's path. Consequently, he persisted to send military aid to the Yemeni Royalists, and under Wilson British mercenaries continued to flow into the YAR.

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[691] Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary Rusk and British Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker, October 27, 1964, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[692] Ibid.
[693] McNamara, *Britain, Nasser and the Balance of Power in the Middle East,* 201.
[694] Paper Prepared in the Department of State, "British Position in Aden and the Persian Gulf," September 2, 1965, *FRUS* 21:63.

Nasser likewise confronted a daunting task. To withdraw from his commitments in Aden and along Saudi Arabia's frontier meant a retreat from the YAR. He persisted to hit Whitehall and Saudi Arabia where it hurt them most: in Aden, Cyprus, Libya, and along the Saudi border.[695] In Aden, Nasser gave the Arab nationalists political and military support and used UAR's *Mukhābarāt* intelligence services to infiltrate the government. The *Mukhābarāt* also coordinated guerilla attacks on British forces and the Special Branch of the Aden Police, which was allied with Britain.[696]Although Nasser limited the number and scope of the "terrorist" attacks, the aim of his plan was to dishearten the local Arab chieftains in Aden, many of whom were loyal to Britain, and demonstrate to them the cost of supporting Britain in Southwestern Arabia.

If Nasser could not force Wilson to leave Aden through political pressure, then perhaps he could convince the Arab chieftains in the SAF and Aden that Whitehall's grip in Southwestern Arabia was tenuous and would not last. Nasser attempted to impress upon the Aden tribesmen the gravity of the situation. Britain would eventually withdraw from Southwestern Arabia, abandoning the Aden tribesmen to the Arab nationalists. The message Nasser sent them was: if they choose me, I will spare you after Britain pulls out; but if you remain by Whitehall's side, the Arab nationalists—who would fill the vacuum created by Britain's retreat—will not spare you. Britain's allies in the SAF depended on London's "substantial cooperation" to maintain power.[697] Once that support was removed, they would eventually become prey to the region's Nasserists.

[695] As mentioned before Nasser attacked British bases throughout the Middle East as part of his strategy to rid the Middle East of Whitehall's influence.
[696] Intelligence Memorandum, "The Security Situation in Aden," June 9, 1965, *FRUS* Vol. 21:61.
[697] Ibid.

To carry out this new stratagem, Nasser needed to redirect more resources away from Egypt and instead to Southwestern Arabia. Egyptian troops, intelligence officers, and financing for propaganda once again poured into the region. His intelligence services conducted "terrorist actions" against British troops and those who remained loyal to Britain. A significant challenge for Nasser was conducting these actions against London while maintaining diplomatic relations with the United States, which also wanted to prevent a British withdrawal from the region. Johnson, however, saw Nasser's anti-British and anti-imperialist actions in Southwestern Arabia and throughout the Middle East as targeting the United States. In Johnson's eye, the Egyptian president's actions to solve his security and political dilemma were seen as an anti-American crusade designed to end Western influence in the Middle East. [698]

Al-Jayfi and the Ba'athists' Conspiracy in Yemen

As the violence along the YAR's borders increased with attacks coming from the British controlled SAF and from Saudi Arabia and Egyptian counterattacks, Nasser confronted a more complex situation in the YAR. A power struggle involving Hammud al-Jayfi, a suspected Ba'athist, within the YAR developed and complicated Nasser's plans for the YAR and the Middle East. Al-Jayfi an unknown figure before the YAR revolution emerged as a charismatic Arab nationalist within Presidents Sallal's government, which made matters worse for Nasser.

By the summer of 1964, the YAR's government suffered a prolonged civil conflict that cost it both in the loss of human lives and the loss of finances that could be spent elsewhere. The civil war's financial burden had weakened Sallal's government to the extent that it needed a constant flow of Egyptian money and military aid to remain in power. While Sallal's forces fought the Royalists in the countryside, it also battled corrupt bureaucrats within the government.

[698] Ibid.

Some of the tribesmen in the countryside saw this economic and political turmoil in Sana'a and waited for the opportune time to join the winning side.

In the mist of this corruption in Sallal's government and the constant conflict between the Royalists and the Republicans—who were seen as allies to Egypt—al-Jayfi stood out. Due to his sufficient administrative skills and efficient financial abilities, many Yemenis saw al-Jayfi as a champion of Arab nationalism and a savior of the YAR. Conversely, Sallal's reputation continued to suffer due to the civil war. The tribesmen also favored al-Jayfi for his steadfast nationalism and his defiance to Amir and other Egyptians within Yemen. From Cairo's point of view, however, al-Jayfi was not the long sought messiah of Arab nationalism, but a Ba'athist agent bent on hijacking the Nasserist revolution.[699] Thus for both friends and foes, al-Jayfi was a man to watch.

What to do about al-Jayfi ensnared Nasser in a political dilemma. Sacking al-Jayfi risked alienating many of his allies within the YAR's government; yet keeping him in power risked losing Yemen to the Ba'athists. Shrewdly, Nasser decided to use al-Jayfi. On April 27, Nasser visited Yemen to deal with the al-Jayfi problem. Amir and others in the RCC recommended that they expand the YAR's government to deal with the growing crisis and sack al-Jayfi. Nasser approved the former recommendation, but decided to give al-Jayfi a leading role in the newly-expanded government. As part of the expansion, Nasser gave al-Jayfi—Sallal's political rival—leadership of a powerless consultative council to the president of the YAR while Sallal remained at his post as president.[700] In addition, Nasser approved a new constitution and restructured the government's bureaucracy to make it run more efficiently. He hoped in the process to boaster Sallal's reputation—a tactic that Nasser hoped would ensure the long-term survival of the YAR's

[699] Central Intelligence Bulletin, April 29, 1964, NARA/CIA/ORIS.
[700] Ibid.

Nasserist regime while it kept al-Jayfi under supervision and checked Ba'athists infiltration into the YAR's government.[701]

Although Nasser's strategy to deal with the growing popularity of al-Jayfi and the Ba'athists was successful, the affair represented yet another problem for Nasser. Indeed, he had to redirect his attention away from Egypt to the conflict in Southwestern Arabia. For the moment, then, Jayfi's popularity was checked, but the growing popularity of the Ba'athists in Yemen continued unabated. As Nasser's forces suppressed the rebellion, the measures they took were seen by Yemenis as acts of occupation. The Ba'athists, therefore, were seen as an alternative to Nasserism and the Egyptian occupation. For Nasser, it seemed the Ba'athists, the Saudis, the British, and now the Americans were all in alliance against him. Ironically, every proposed solution produced its own set of problems.

Lyndon Johnson and the Spirit of the Jidda Agreement

In 1964, the primary concern of the Johnson administration towards the Yemeni conflict was to maintain the postwar petroleum order. To achieve this goal in Southwestern Arabia, the White House needed Britain to maintain its military presence in the region.[702] Due to the Yemeni civil War, however, the likeliness that Whitehall would be able to maintain a military presence in Southwestern Arabia were slowly disappearing. Johnson's advisors all agreed that the best way to successfully implement their policies in the Arabian Peninsula was to end the civil war in Yemen. If the administration could persuade Faysal and Nasser to sit down and negotiate an end to the conflict, then perhaps London would be able to fulfill America's Cold War mission in the region.

[701] Telegram from the Embassy in the UAR to the Department of State, May 8, 1964, *FRUS* vol. 21:336.
[702] Telegram from Rusk to Talbot and Hart, April 16, 1965, NSF, Saudi Arabia, Box 155, LBJL.

The American effort began in early May before the downfall of Home and his Conservatives in parliament. Wilson's initial promise to end the conflict presented an opportunity for the White House to prod the belligerents towards peace. In May 1964, Rusk contacted Badeau to inform him of the decision to force a peace. Badeau warned the secretary that the real issue was not Nasser's offensive in Yemen, but Saudi and British backing for the Royalists. Moreover, Nasser would not withdraw from Yemen without assurances the YAR would not be attacked by the Saudis or the British in future.[703]

When negotiations began between Nasser and Faysal in the aftermath of the Cairo summit in 1964, Johnson's advisors hoped that an end to the conflict in Southwestern Arabia would soon follow. When the subsequent and secret Alexandria Agreement was signed between the combatants, it appeared that the civil war would actually end and Washington's anxiety for the security of the Arabian Peninsula would soon dissipate. By 1965, however, and despite promises by both sides to maintain a ceasefire, the proxy war between the belligerents continued. When the war in Yemen spread to British-controlled Aden, it forced Whitehall to reassess its plans east of Suez.

The conflict in Yemen posed a predicament for the White House. The United States recognized the YAR and the revolutionary Republicans as the legitimate representatives of the Yemeni people. But Washington's allies in the region, Saudi Arabia and Britain, recognized the exiled Royalists as the only rightful government of Yemen. Washington was now caught in a dilemma. If it continued to support Nasser with economic aid, America's allies would complain that the White House chose Nasser over them. Yet if the Johnson administration chose to give military aid to its allies in the region, Nasser would abandon American-Egyptian cooperation in

[703] Telegram from Badeau to Rusk, May 3, 1964, UAR Cables, Vol. 1, NSF, Box 158, LBJL.

the Middle East and give his full support to the Soviet Union.[704] In either case, Washington would have to pay a political price.

The irony of the situation was that Faysal and Wilson aided the Royalists against the American-recognized YAR. The situation was analogous to America's fight against North Vietnam in which the North sent military aid to South Vietnamese Vietcong to use against the American-backed South Vietnamese government.[705] Faysal's conduct in Yemen mirrored the North Vietnamese offensive, thereby complicating matters for American strategists.

The matter was rendered more complex for the White House by Saudi estimates for Nasser. Believing that Nasser was on the brink of defeat, Faysal stalled the peace talks and continued to send armaments to the Royalists. When Rusk pressed the Saudis to end aid to the Royalists, Ibrahim al-Sowayel, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, sarcastically retorted that Nasser was on the verge of defeat and Faysal gave aid to the Royalists "trying help him get out" of Yemen.[706] Faysal based this forecast on the belief that Yemen placed a heavy burden on Egypt's resources, and if Nasser wanted to maintain power, he would have to withdraw his forces in order to satisfy domestic dissenters. If Nasser stubbornly maintained his position in Yemen, Faysal hoped that the drain on his resources and political pressure at home would lead to his overthrow.[707] Consequently, when the Jidda talks opened, Faysal assumed he had the upper hand and used the talks as a façade to make it appear he wanted peace while he waited for Nasser to retreat.

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[704] Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense McNamara, April 21, 1965, *FRUS*, vol 21:366.
[705] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia, March 20, 1965, *FRUS*, vol. 21: 364.
[706] Ibid.
[707] National Intelligence Estimate, December 8, 1966, Saudi Arabian Folder, Box 6, LBJL.

However, Faysal miscalculated. Nasser had realized that the only way to secure the YAR was through some sort of an agreement with Saudi Arabia. During the negotiations, as Faysal attempted to stall on certain issues, he yielded on sensitive ones, including permitting Royalists to participate in the government of the YAR. When Faysal demanded that a popular referendum include Royalists, Nasser agreed to a popular plebiscite to be held in 1966 and to an interim conference of Royalists and Republicans. When Faysal demanded that UAR troops leave Yemen, Nasser surprised Faysal by agreeing to withdraw his forces within a 10-month period beginning November 1965. Since the start of the Yemeni conflict, Nasser had refused to allow former Royalists to participate in governing the YAR and he flatly refused to withdraw troops from the YAR without first ensuring the security of Sallal's government. Cornered by Nasser's countermoves, Faysal was forced to make concessions or else he would appear to Washington that he preferred war over peace. On August 24, Nasser and Faysal agreed to a cease-fire agreement and both men promised to take steps to end hostilities in Yemen. But if Nasser hoped to end Saudi support for the Royalists, the Jidda accords reinforced Faysal's belief that Nasser wanted to withdraw from the YAR as quickly as possible and therefore the Egyptian leader negotiated from a point of weakness.

Faysal also misread Nasser's desperation at Jidda as a sign that Arab socialism (Nasserism) in the Arab world was on the retreat while Arab conservatism was on the march. Saudi Arabia's deputy foreign Minister, Sayyid Omar Saqqaf, reiterated this belief with Secretary Rusk telling Rusk that Jidda proved that the socialist front in the Arab world was in retreat. The Arabs in Iraq and Syria were turning away from socialism and towards moderation Saqqaf told Rusk.[708]

[708] Ibid.

The White House had its own opinion as to why Nasser was so desperate for peace. Johnson's advisors again convinced themselves that PL-480 food aid played a significant in persuading Nasser to come to terms with Faysal over Yemen.[709] They saw food aid as leverage able to tame Nasser in the expectation that he would then conform to America's postwar strategy for the Middle East. Therefore, in 1964, limiting Nasser's nationalist agenda through food aid became a primary objective the Johnson administration.[710]

Despite the optimistic belief that peace was within reach, Saudi hubris stalled the Jidda negotiations and forced Nasser to reassess his plans. Faysal spoke of peace at Jidda while he also prepared for a political war in the greater Middle East against Nasser. Shortly after the Jidda talks, Faysal intended to form an "Islamic Pact" comprised of conservative states in the Middle East with the aim of delivering what he believed would be *coup de grâce* to Arab socialism. What drove Nasser's fears was Faysal's Mideast tour to anti-Arab nationalist conservative states such as Iran and Morocco. Nasser warned the White House that Faysal was playing a "mysterious and evasive game" to form an Islamic pact while simultaneously talking peace.[711] Meanwhile, Nasser learned that Faysal continued to support the Royalists with financial and military assistance. Johnson's deputies "advised" Faysal to avoid giving more aid to the Royalists while at the same time Rusk determined that it would prudent to not inform Nasser in order to prevent the collapse of the Jidda talks.[712]

On April 8, Nasser told Ambassador Luscious "Luke" Battle, who replaced Badeau after the latter retired in September 1964 that "the Jidda agreement is finished. There is no agreement"

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[709] Memorandum of Conversation, October 19, 1965, *FRUS* vol. 21: Doc 382.
[710] The role of economic aid, the so called "Food for Peace" program played American-Egyptian relations has been recounted extensively by William Burns. See William Burns, *Economic Aid and American Policy toward Egypt, 1955-1981* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1985).
[711] Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the UAR, January 20, 1966, *FRUS* vol. 21:386.
[712] Telegram from the State Department to the Embassy in the UAR, August 4, 1965, NSF, Saudi Arabia, Box 155, LBJL.

between Egypt and Saudi Arabia he informed Battle.[713] Nasser explained that although he desired an end to end the conflict, "Faysal believed that when I entered into the Jidda agreement that it was a move form weakness but it was not. It was a move to avoid a clash between the UAR and Saudi Arabia. That clash is now before us."[714] Faysal's myriad subterfuges after the Jidda agreement caused alarm in Cairo. Nasser thought he could no longer ignore Faysal's moves to isolate him in the region. And despite extensive efforts by the White House to end the war in Yemen, the conflict continued.

Conclusion

As the war in Yemen dragged on and the Royalists backed by Saudi Arabia battled the Republicans, who were supported by Nasser, American-Egyptian relations deteriorated. The United States persisted to side with Britain and Saudi Arabia in the conflict despite Faysal's and Wilson's support for the Royalists and mercenaries, respectfully. After the Jidda Agreement collapsed, Nasser attempted throughout 1964 and 1965 to regain the high ground and hoped to negotiate another settlement from a position of strength.

In September 1966, however, Nasser began to face trouble within the YAR as the Republicans began to first question and then resist Egyptian rule in the country. As Republican leaders began to look towards Damarcus for leadership—as Nasser feared—the rivalry between the Ba'athists and Nasserists heated up. Nasser then decided to replace the Republican rulers who openly resisted Egyptian with a puppet government.[715] Moreover, Nasser continued to use Yemen as a base to harass the British in Aden. And in Saudi Arabia, Nasser stepped-up his

[713] Telegram from the Embassy in the United Arab Republic to the Department of State, April 8, 1966, *FRUS* vol. 21: Doc 398.
[714] Ibid.
[715] National Intelligence Estimate, "The Role of Saudi Arabia," December 8, 1966, NSF, Saudi Arabia, LBJL.

campaign to force Faysal to come to the negotiating table by using Saudi dissidents to conduct guerrilla attacks against Faysal. Faysal, likewise, continued to increase his aid to the Royalists.

More importantly, the conflict in Yemen took its toll on U.S.-Egyptian relations, which continued to deteriorate throughout 1965 and ultimately hit bottom by 1966. Nasser believed that the West along with the reactionary conservative regimes in Arab world conspired against him in the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen, Aden, and the SAF became for Nasser the battleground for the future of the Arab world and pan-Arabism. If Nasser succeeded there, then it would prove the success of Nasserism and the failure of Arab conservatism. Nasser, on the other hand, saw Faysal, Wilson, and Johnson all allied against him and Arab nationalism. Faysal conspired with the West to defeat Arab nationalism.[716] The fall of American-Egyptian relations due to Nasser's security and political dilemma in Southwestern Arabia caused him to abandon "ice box" and resulted in an Egyptian Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and missile program, which set off alarm bells in Israel. He also began to overtly support anti-Western revolutionary movements throughout the world, leading to further break in relations.

[716] Ibid.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The breakup of the UAR and the war in Yemen marked a turning point in American-Egyptian relations. Nasser had hoped that the road to recovering the prestige he had squandered after the collapse of the UAR ran through Yemen. He also sought to assuage domestic demands for political reform by using the civil war in Yemen as a "rally event" to divert public attention from the domestic crisis in Egypt.[717] Yemen, therefore, became to Nasser a beacon of hope for Nasserism and a potential remedy to his domestic and regional problems.

Nasser's hopes soon crumbled, however, as Yemen unexpectedly turned into a trap. The conflict in Yemen soon propelled him into a direct conflict with Saudi Arabia, Britain, and Israel as well as strained relations with the United States. As his troops became bogged down in the mountains of Yemen, his diplomats became equally bogged down in Washington where they were attempting to salvage Egypt's relationship with the United States. As Nasser's envoys scrambled about Washington in an effort to save diplomatic ties with America, Lyndon Johnson—pressed by the oil and Israeli lobbies—dealt yet another blow to U.S. relations with Egypt by agreeing to sell advanced weapons systems to Israel and Saudi Arabia. But Johnson's strategy to gain domestic support also triggered a Middle Eastern arms race and indirectly produced a security dilemma for Nasser.

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[717] I refer to the definition used by international relations (IR) theorists to refer to political leaders who engineer overseas crises in order to divert attention from severe domestic problems. IR scholars also use the terms "social imperialism" "diversionary war" to describe this phenomenon. See Georg Simmel, *Conflict* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955); and Lewis A Coser, *The Function of Social Conflict* (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1956). For more resent literature see Jack S. Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in Manus I. Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, (1989), 259-288; and Geoffrey Blainey, *Causes of War* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 72-86; and Amy Oakes, "Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands," *Security Studies* 15, No. 3 (July - September 2006):431-63.

To complicate matters, following Nasser's intervention, Yemen became an ideological and political struggle between the Nasserists, with their progressive pan-Arab reforms, and the conservatives, with their pro-Islamic monarchial beliefs. In addition, the arrival of British mercenaries and the delivery of Saudi arms to the Royalists further exacerbated the conflict. In both cases, the Johnson administration chose to remain silent. To Nasser, however, the White House's silence was tantamount to giving a green light to London and Riyadh to continue their aggression in the YAR.

The Yemeni conflict also arose at a moment of transition in the American government. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, Johnson sought to carve out an approach to the Middle East and the civil war in Yemen that differed from that of his slain predecessor. Although Johnson sought the same policy as Kennedy—to maintain the postwar petroleum order and eliminate Soviet influence in the Middle East—his method was less glamorous and more vocally critical of Nasser's political maneuvers in Yemen and elsewhere than Kennedy's. There would be consequences to this new course.

Rather than viewing Johnson as refining U.S. strategy toward the Middle East, Nasser and the RCC interpreted it as a complete reversal of Kennedy's "Egypt first" approach. Nasser now suspected Johnson of intending to abandon Egypt in favor of either Saudi Arabia or Israel. Bewildered by the American system of checks and balances, Nasser and his inner circle believed that Johnson's approach was master-minded by an "invisible government" in Washington that conspired with Israel and the conservative Arab regimes to combat Nasserism. These new perceptions drove Nasser's subsequent moves.

But these moves by Nasser would produce their own effects, specifically in Israel. As the Yemeni conflict raged in Southwestern Arabia, Nasser's security concerns and his attempts to

deal with them set off alarm bells in Tel Aviv. In response, Israel sought to acquire American arms to offset what it perceived as an Egyptian military advantage. This mutual suspicion between Egypt and Israel soon triggered a regional nuclear and missile arms race, which threatened to unravel the delicate ice box strategy that Kennedy and Nasser had developed to remove the Arab-Israeli conflict from the center stage of Middle East politics.[718] Yet the unrelenting domestic and regional pressure from Yemen and Arab nationalists forced Nasser to abandon the ice box strategy and use the arms race against Israel as a pretext to solve his own problems. What followed was a return of the Arab-Israeli conflict and a regional competition among the Arab states to outdo one another in championing Palestinian rights. Yemen's civil war, the proxy wars among Saudi Arabia, Britain, and Egypt, and the return of the Arab-Israeli conflict all complicated the postwar petroleum order for the Johnson administration. The end result was a break in American-Egyptian relations, which led down the path to the May Crisis and the Six Day War.

This dissertation shows that the Six Day War broke out due to the infamous *infisal* (the breakup of the UAR), Egypt's involvement in the Yemeni conflict, and the breakdown in American-Egyptian relations. While some scholars focus on the conflict between Nasser and Johnson and the anti-American campaign in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, I identify the Yemeni civil war and the struggle to control the Arab nationalist between Egypt and Saudi Arabia as the real reason for the May Crisis in 1967. This new interpretation explains why Nasser and Johnson confronted one another for reasons other than poor personal chemistry.

[718] For the arms race that developed between Egypt and Israel in the years preceding the Six Day War, see Abraham Ben-Zvi, L*yndon B. Johnson and the Politics of Arms Sales to Israel: In the Shadow of the Hawk* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004).

This dissertation also contributes to our understanding of U.S. foreign policy by offering the first archival study of U.S. policy towards Egypt in the 1960s using the Yemeni civil war as the prism through which to view matters.

This study also presents a new perspective towards the Yemeni conflict by employing IR theory and by applying the security and political dilemma concepts to Middle East history. I argue that the Yemeni conflict in the 1960s led to a break in American-Egyptian relations, which led directly to the Six Day War. Indeed, when the May Crisis broke out in 1967 between Israel and Egypt, the competition between Tel Aviv and Cairo had been ongoing for years.

Israeli concerns over Nasser's arms buildup in Yemen led Tel Aviv to raise this issue with the White House. But the Israelis went further and sent arms to the Royalists in order to bog down Nasser's forces in Southwestern Arabia. When YAR and Egyptian troops captured Israeli arms with Royalist fighters, it convinced Nasser and the RCC what they had long suspected—that Israel was arming and training the Royalists so as to gain a military advantage over Egypt in the Levant.

The *coup de grâce* to the ice box strategy was delivered with the forming of the PLO. From 1964 to 1966, the PLO conducted a campaign of guerrilla raids deep into Israel, which unfailingly prompted Israeli reprisal raids. Nasser then decided to sign defense pacts with both Jordan and Syria in order to discourage the Israeli raids. The Arab defense pacts alarmed the Israelis, and many Israelis—Defense Minister Moshe Dayan among them—were genuinely concerned that the Arabs were prepared to attack.

But a few days after the defense pacts were signed, on November 11, 1966, Israel miscalculated and conducted its first large-scale operation since the Suez War. This time the target was the Jordanian West Bank town of Samu. Civilians were killed, homes destroyed, and

the Jordanian government brought to its knees. International condemnation soon followed and the Johnson administration found itself voting in the UN to condemn Tel Aviv for the raid. Despite this international backlash against Israel, Nasser appeared weak. He did nothing in response to Israel's attacks, and the defensive pacts he signed were seen in the Arab world as worthless.

The situation continued to escalate. By April 1967, Israel and its Arab neighbors were on the brink of war. A series of incidents tipped the scale towards war when Israeli and Syrian cross border raids along the demilitarized zone resulted in air battle over the skies of Damascus in which Israeli Mirages downed six Syrian MiG-21s. As a result, in May, Nasser was forced to react. He ordered the United Nations Emergency Force, which was stationed in the Sinai after the Suez Crisis of 1956, to withdraw from the area. He then began massing troops, sparking an international crisis that led to the June 1967 War. Thus, the road to the Six Day War was paved in Yemen.

Throughout the 1960s and the final days before the Six Day War, neither side intended to start a war. But all involved misread one another. Nasser misinterpreted Israeli intentions and both Johnson and the Israelis misconstrued Nasser's. What was seen by one side as defensive measures was perceived by the other as preparation for an offensive. Moshe Dayan, Israel's defense minister during the Six Day War, best explained this misreading of intentions when he reported to the Israeli general staff that Egypt suffered a devastating defeat because Nasser failed to appreciate the advantage of a striking first.[719] But Nasser never intended to attack first; his moves throughout the 1960s as well as the days leading up to the Six Day War were meant to

[719] Oren, *Six Days of War*, 311.

prevent war, not start one. The irony of all this is that both sides wanted to avoid war, but both sides inexorably took steps towards it.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alexander Mahmoud Shelby was born in Jerusalem and moved to the United States with his parents at an early age. He lived in Florida, Puerto Rico, Kansas City, Texas, North Carolina, and New Orleans. While in New Orleans he attended the University of New Orleans for his Bachelor's Degree in International Relations. He remained at the University of New Orleans for his Master's Degree in History under Dr. Günter J. Bischof. While living in New Orleans and pursuing his M.A., he witnessed the destruction of the city by Hurricane Katrina. He evacuated first to Baton Rouge and then to Orlando and finished his M.A. through an online correspondence with Dr. Bischof. After completing his M.A., he then moved to Tallahassee to attend Florida State University to pursue his doctoral studies. At Florida State University he studied American foreign relations in the Middle East under Michael Creswell. He is married and has three children.